*Social Development in India – The Policy Canvas : An Overview of the Last Fifty Years & Emerging Issues for the Twenty-First Century*

# *Project Report*


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# Content

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# Chapter 1

## Social Development: Its Place in Development Policy

1. Social development has come to acquire a very important and new salience in the literature and practice of development. Development is now perceived and defined in a very different way than it was during the first three decades after the Second World War. During that period, development was identified with growth in material output. Prof. Rajni Kothari has very aptly described this early model of growth as one in which abstractions of GDP rates, saving ratios and technological co-efficient ruled the roost and human beings, social formations and even the structure of State power were left out of purview.[1]

2. The two concepts that dominated development thinking during that period were the Harrod - Domar model which established a relationship between capital investment and rate of growth, and Professor W.W. Rostow's theory of `stages of growth' or `take off' theory which was perceived entirely in terms of the transformation of the physical dimensions of the economy leading to the take-off stage of a self-sustaining accelerated rate of growth. Subsequently, the concept was refined by relating it to the goal of the maximisation of welfare by introducing distributional equality, but for several decades this equality was perceived purely in income terms.

## I. `Social' Development – the Concept & its Growing Reach

3. What is described above represented the mainstream thinking on development of economists and policy makers in India and several other countries. However, visionaries, social reformers and leaders of India's independence movement propounded a wider concept of development. Mahatma Gandhi set before the nation the objective of " wiping every tear from every eye". This literally sums up the more comprehensive and inclusive concept of development that came to be recognised from the

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1 Rajni Kothari. 1977. `Social Policy, Development and Democracy' in Ghanshyam Shah. ed. *Social Transformation in India Vol. 1*, Jaipur : Rawat Publications, pp. 37-54.

decade of the 70s. It embraces the goal of meeting the basic needs of the people, giving them freedom and dignity and creating an environment in which they can be happy in a comprehensive sense of the term.

4. Gandhiji did not see economics and ethics in separate compartments. He said, "economics that hurt the moral well-being of the individual or a nation is immoral and therefore sinful". [2] He devoted most of his economic thinking to working out a programme of reconstruction of poor nations which would avoid the problems brought about by indiscriminate modernisation. Instead of developing a theory of investment planning at the national level, Gandhiji developed a theory of constructive work at the local level. By far the most fundamental question raised in Gandhian economics is that of an alternative to the consumer society and alternative life style centred on need rather than greed, as Gandhiji put it. His search for a solution to mass poverty derives from a critique of the modern society as a whole - of a society which generates affluence for some and poverty for the many.

5. The essential Gandhian thinking on development was reflected in the objective that Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru outlined for the country in his celebrated "Tryst with Destiny" speech delivered at midnight on August 14,1947. He said: "The service of India means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity." However, in spite of the declaration in his speech of this comprehensive objective of development, the development strategy followed by India and most other developing countries at that time defined development in terms of growth in material output. Development was identified with economic development and social development was brought in only as thin icing on the economic cake. In more specific terms, it was seen as promoting social welfare and providing social services. The crucial role of the activities in the social sector in promoting development remained unrecognised for several years. Concepts such as meeting the basic needs of the people, changing the social structure and participation in the process of development were articulated only towards the end of the 60s and the early 70s. Even then they did not make much of an impression on mainstream thinking.

6. Recently Prof. Amartya Sen has brought about a veritable revolution in development thinking by defining development as "expansion of opportunities", or "freedoms" that individuals in society enjoy.[3]

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2 Ganguli, B.N. 1973. *Gandhi's Social Philosophy: Perspective and Relevance*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing & Council for Social Development.

3 The same notion of development was propounded by Prof. Arthur Lewis in his classical work on development theory published in the early 1950s, in which he emphasised that the objective of development is to increase "the range of human choice". (W. Arthur Lewis. 1968, c1956. *Development Planning: the Essentials of Economic Policy*. London: George Allen & Unwin). However, unlike Prof. Amartya Sen, he did not bring out the social dimensions of development and concentrated specifically on the growth of output per head.

Opportunities can be of an intrinsic importance and therefore worth pursuing as a goal by itself or having the instrumental value of promoting development. Prof. Sen’s deeper insight into the development process has now come to be almost universally accepted and has become the basis for policy formulation by the governments of almost all developing countries. Developed countries are also trying to promote this concept of development through the leverage they have by virtue of their aid programmes and trade policy; international organisations like the World Bank, UNDP, United Nations and its specialised agencies have been trying to reorient their norm-setting and theoretical work as well as their development cooperation programmes on the basis of this broader definition of development.

7. To expand the "opportunities” and "freedoms” of the individual, it is necessary to enhance her or his capabilities. Enhancement of capabilities, therefore, is now widely recognised as the objective of development.

8. The World Development Report (1999-2000) defines the goal of development policy as the creation of "sustainable improvements in the quality of life for all people". Improvement in the quality of life is implicit in Amartya Sen’s concept of development as the expansion of choice or opportunities or freedom. What the World Development Report definition adds is the concept of sustainability and equity by using the words "sustainable” and "for all people". Sustainable development for all people means, in addition to raising per capita income, improving peoples’ health and educational opportunities, giving every one the chance to participate in public life and helping to ensure a clean environment.

9. Accumulation of human capital has proved to be a key factor in accelerating development in several countries, particularly the East and South East Asian countries. Provisioning of education, health and nutrition play a very important role in the accumulation of human capital. Thus human development is the key to the formation of human capital. But as Prof. Amartya Sen has stated, `human development’ goes beyond that. It makes a direct contribution to the expansion of human capabilities and the quality of life. The annual release by the UNDP of its Human Development Reports since 1990 has been the most important factor popularising the concept of human development.

10. The W.D.R. (1999-2000) brings in the concept of social capital, defined as "the network and relationship that both encourage trust and reciprocity and shape the quality and quantity of the society's social interactions". Social capital thus defined has a significant impact on a range of development processes. To illustrate, the Report says that empirical evidence has shown that in education, teachers are more committed, students achieve higher test scores and school facilities are better utilised in communities where parents and citizens take an active interest in children's educational well-being. In health services, doctors and nurses are more likely to show up for work and perform their duties more attentively where their actions are supported and monitored by citizen groups. In rural development, villages with higher

social capital seek greater use of credit. Social capital serves as an insurance mechanism for the poor who are unable to access market-based alternatives.

11. The role of human development in bringing about social and economic restructuring has been brought out very succinctly in Professor Amartya Sen's Asia and Pacific lecture. [4] A special feature of the East and South East Asian development process has been an emphasis on basic education as a prime mover for change and wide dissemination of basic economic entitlement through education and training, through land reform and through availability of credit. Professor Sen argues that there is sufficient evidence that even with relatively low income, a population that guarantees basic social services can improve length and quality of life. Because of this factor, China already had quite a high life expectancy at birth even in the pre-reform era i.e. prior to 1979. Since basic education and health are also exceptionally labour-intensive activities, they are much cheaper in poorer countries than in the richer ones. Thus human development contributes to the quality of life even in the absence of its impact on economic and industrial expansion. Secondly, it greatly facilitates such expansion. Thirdly, it improves the efficiency and widens the reach of the market economy. For example, literacy contributes to economic development through quality control and production to specification. (There is also much evidence to show that education, particularly female education, helps in reducing fertility rates).

12. Empirical studies show that whereas there is a weak relationship between economic development and rates of improvements in vital measures of development like education, life expectancy, child mortality and gender equality, there is a strong positive relationship between key social characteristics and the attainment of development defined in the broader sense of the term. One study found that a 10% increase in the female literacy rate reduced child mortality by an equal percentage. Taking developing countries as a whole, gains in female education in the 1960-90 period might have accounted for as much as a 38% decline in infant mortality and a 58% drop in the total illiteracy rate. On the other hand, despite the low level of GDP per capita in Sri Lanka, life expectancy there is as high as 73 years and infant mortality as low as 14. [5]

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4 Amartya Sen. 1999, First Reprint 2000. *Beyond the Crisis: Development Strategies in Asia*. New Delhi : Capital Publishing Company & Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore

5 The World Bank. 2000. *Entering the 21st Century: World Development Report 1999/2000*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

# II. Role of Government in Social Development

13. At the beginning of the drive for reforms in developing countries, there was a deliberate effort to exaggerate the adverse implications of government's role in development and to suggest the withdrawal of the government from the development process. This swing of the pendulum has more or less been arrested and a more balanced view is taken of the role of the government. That the government has to play a crucial role in the development process is no longer an issue. The issue basically is the extent, nature and direction of government interventions. The areas in which the government’s role is regarded as most conducive to development are provisioning of social services and social and physical infrastructure building. There is an emerging consensus that the government can play its role best in partnership with other agents of development, particularly the private sector, the NGOs and civil society organisations. There is also a great deal of emphasis today on good governance, free from corruption and embodying transparent and participatory processes.

14. In his Asia and Pacific Lecture, Prof.Amartya Sen underlines that a deliberate combination of State action and the use of the market economy was one of the special features of the East and South East Asian development process. The WDR (1999-2000) makes the same point when it states that the governments in the East and South East Asian countries intervened in trade to regulate exports and to regulate financial markets. They directed investments in particular areas, encouraged savings and lower interest rates and increased profitability.

15. In his lecture, Prof. Sen states that the overall achievement of the market are deeply contingent on political and social arrangements. The market mechanism has achieved great successes under conditions in which opportunities offered by it have been reasonably shared. Provision of basic education and health and widely shared command over elementary resources like land have been conducive to ensuring the success of the development process. But these demands call for appropriate public policies and "carefully and determined public action going well beyond the simple fostering of markets".

16. The role of institutions in a dispensation where the State occupies pride of place has come to be recognised as a crucial factor in the development process. The W.D.R. (1999-2000) states, "a strong network of effective organisations and enabling institutions is central to holistic development". Countries with stable governments, predictable method of changing laws, secure property rights and a strong judiciary saw higher investment and growth than those lacking these institutions. Even the outcome of privatisation is heavily dependent on government’s structure, macro-economic and structural factors, competitiveness of markets, social sustainability, regulatory regimes and corporate and commercial law.

17. Today "people" are regarded as the means and the end of development. Even with the best will in the world, a government is unlikely to meet collective needs efficiently if it does not know what these needs are. It can know this only if it comes closer to the people. This means bringing popular voices into policy making; and opening up ways for individual users, the private sector organisations and other groups in the civil society. It can also mean greater decentralisation of government power and resources.[6]

18. Increasing opportunities for participation of the people can enhance State's capabilities in the following ways: [7]

a. When citizens can express their opinions and press their demands publicly within the framework of the law, States acquire some of the credibility that they need to govern well. Broad-based discussions of policy goals can also reduce the risks implicit in a powerful minority monopolising the direction of government. The States that achieve credibility in this fashion have more flexibility in policy implementation and have an easier time engaging citizens in the pursuit of collective goals.

b. Where markets are absent, as in the case of most public goods, popular voice can reduce information problem and lower transaction costs. The emergence of private and NGO alternatives for the provisioning of public goods and services can help meet gaps in the supply of such goods and services. NGOs can both be partners and competitors in the delivery of public services. When backed by the citizens' voice, they can exert useful pressure on government to improve the delivery and quality of public services.

c. In the management of common property resources, the provision of basic infrastructure and the delivery of essential services, there is considerable scope for involving the public directly.

19. A recent study of villages in Tanzania found that households in villages with a higher degree of participation in village level social organisations have a higher average income per capita than those household in villages with low levels of social capital. In certain cases as in the West Bank, Gaza strip and Cambodia, NGOs are numerically important enough to be able to substitute for weak public sector capacity and to mobilise funds from a range of private sources.[8]

20. Yet not all NGOs are involved in the delivery of services and many others are research and civic education groups, advocacy organisations and professional and business associations. NGOs tend to be one step removed from ordinary citizens. By contrast, grassroots organisations, community based groups and people's organisations engage the citizens directly.

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6 The World Bank. 2000. *Entering the 21st Century: World Development Report 1999/2000*. New York : Oxford University Press, Inc.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

21. Governments can facilitate popular participation by safeguarding the rights of the people to organise, gain access to information, engage in contracts and own and manage assets.

# III. Economic Reforms & Social Development

22. In the initial period of the discussion on reforms, policies to facilitate the free play of market forces were regarded as the over-riding necessity for achieving development, irrespective of how they affected the social dynamics. It was argued - and even now there are zealots arguing on the same lines, that the increase in the GNP brought about by economic reforms can take care of the objectives of social development. In this connection, statistical evidence has been adduced which show a positive relationship between increase in GNP and poverty reduction. This is a lopsided and partial way to look at the development process.

23. Prof. Amartya Sen has raised the very pertinent question: Are not "the reforms much too conservative in keeping intact governmental under-activity in social infrastructure, while trying to cure governmental over-activity in trade and manufacturing industries"?[9]

24. Prof. Sen puts the reforms-social development dilemma in the correct perspective when he says that whereas on the one hand, the opportunities offered by a well functioning market may be difficult to use when a person is handicapped by, say, illiteracy or ill health, on the other hand, a person with some education and fine health may still not be able to use his or her capabilities because of the limitations of economic opportunities, arising from absence of markets, or overzealous bureaucratic control or lack of finance. Social opportunities are, thus, influenced by a variety of factors which include both a properly functioning market as well as a deliberate provisioning of social services.[10]

25. Taking the case of India, Prof. Sen states that the blame for independent India's past failures is often put on the insufficient development of market incentives. While there is considerable truth in that diagnosis, it is quite inadequate as an analysis of what has gone wrong in the country. There are many failures, particularly in the development of public educational facilities, health care provisions, social security arrangements, local democracy, environmental protection, and so on, and the stifling of market incentives is only one part of that larger picture.[11]

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9 Amartya Sen. 1998. `Theory & Practice of Development' in Isher Judge Ahluwalia & I.M.D.Little (eds.), India's *Economic Reforms and Development: Essays for Manmohan Singh*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.73-84.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

26. Prof. Sen, therefore, suggests that we should get the "debate on contemporary India's political economy beyond the familiar battle-lines around the issues of economic reforms, liberalisation and de-regulations". The main problem in focussing on that question is the resulting neglect of other public policy matters, dealing in particular with education, health and social security. "If the central challenge of economic development in India is understood in terms of need to expand social opportunities, then liberalisation must be seen as occupying only one part of that large stage."[12]

# IV. `Social Development' at the International Level

27. The United Nations Charter reflects a more balanced development thinking than that prevalent in the three decades after the promulgation of the Charter. Both in the Preamble as well as in Article 55 of the Charter under the heading International Economic and Social Cooperation, social and economic progress has been accorded equal importance. In the Preamble, one of the objectives of the United Nations is "to promote social progress and better standard of life in larger freedom." Under Article 55, the United Nations has undertaken to promote "higher standards of life, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development". The Organisation is also committed to seek solutions to "international economic, social, health and related problems" and to promote "international cultural and educational cooperation". Moreover, both the Preamble and Article 55 give equal primacy to "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms", which are now seen as closely related to social development.

28. Soon after its establishment, the United Nations institutionalised its activities in the field of social development by establishing a Commission on Social Development as well as a Division in the Secretariat to undertake research on and provide advisory services in the field of social development. This Division, apart from discharging its function of back-stopping the work of the Commission, undertook projects of its own in this area, financed by UNDP, and made suggestions for the inclusion of social development elements in national development plans and in UNDP projects. It may be noted here that the founder of the Council for Social Development (C.S.D.) and its first Executive Chairperson-cum-Director, Dr. (Ms.) Durgabai Deshmukh, had used the services of the experts of this Division for suggesting elements of social development to be built into the development planning process in India.

29. In spite of the above-cited Charter provisions and institutional arrangements made in the Secretariat, development activities under the U.N. systems of

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12 Ibid.

organisations were influenced by the then dominant thinking on development, reflected in the Harrod-Domar model and Roster's concepts of stages of growth and take-off. Social development remained a peripheral aspect of the over-all development activities of the United Nations even though United Nations organisations were the only ones which devoted resources and attention to social development. Social development was a minor aspect of the research work undertaken by the U.N. for the analysis of the trends in the world economy and international economic relations, as embodied in the successive World Economic Surveys. This trend continued till almost the beginning of the 1970s. A striking example of this was the manner in which the International Development Strategy for the 1970s relegated issues of social development to the margins of the Strategy. Apart from the influence of the dominant thinking on development, there were some other reasons, mostly of a political nature, which resulted in relegating social development to the background in the discussion on and formulation and adoption of policy measures for development at the international level. These were:

a. Developing countries regarded social development as an underlying assumption behind all their development activities, but they did not articulate problems of social development in any detail because they believed that social development could be best promoted by faster economic growth.

b. They thought that social development fell in the realm of their national responsibility. Therefore, international cooperation did not have any significant role to play in this area.

c. They thought that if social development was discussed in international fora it would become a device for interference in their domestic affairs.

d. Foreign assistance was mainly seen in the form of foreign exchange designed to augment the import capacity of developing countries or bridging the import-export gap. It was intended to supplement domestic resources by meeting a part of the foreign exchange component of development. Domestic resources were not regarded as much of a constraint. This left very little scope for discussing social aspects of development in international fora.

30. Experience of development in the first quarter century after the Second World War, i.e. 1950-75, revealed that:

a. Growth based on capital investment alone was neither possible nor wholesome.

b. In most cases, the main constraint to growth lay in the social field, in the paucity of the provisioning for health and education services and due to limited opportunities of people's participation in the growth process. Accumulation of human capital emerged as the principal stimulant of growth in several countries.

c. There was an increasing recognition of the intrinsic value of the opportunities opened up by social development, like attaining literacy, enjoying good health, being able to exercise fundamental freedoms and human rights etc.

d. In the 1980s and thereafter, governance emerged as a basic constraint to development.

31. Another important development starting from the late 1970s and continuing until now is the demonstrated incapability of developing countries to raise resources of their own for adequately financing development, and the emergence of fiscal imbalances in their economies. We now witness the all-pervading phenomenon of paucity of domestic resources to meet basic needs, finance local currency components of foreign assisted projects and invest in social and physical infrastructures. This has emerged as a major factor why the commitment of the governments of developing countries to social development are no longer taken as axiomatic as was the case during the 50s and the early part of the 60s. From the 1970s onwards, there has been an increasing emphasis on foreign assistance for local cost financing, and donor countries and agencies redirecting their assistance for meeting basic human needs and for human development. Foreign assistance is now being given mostly as a substitute for domestic resources and not necessarily as a supplement to them. This has enabled the donor countries and international agencies increasingly to use commitment and attention to social objectives as conditionalities for assistance. Recipient countries have increasingly started accepting these conditionalities. A significant development during the last decade or so has been attaching non-economic conditionalities to aid and trade concessions, designed to promote social goals. These include good governance and human rights conditionalities. The recipient countries have increasingly come to accept these conditionalities also.

32. By the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the entire orientation of the economic bodies and the organisations of the U.N. System underwent a drastic change, shifting emphasis towards social development. The U.N. system of organisation became increasingly concerned with socio-economic developments within the economies of developing countries and less and less with adjustments and changes in the policies of governments at the international level, let alone with the harmonisation of such policies. Discussions of and policy formulation on hard core economic issues were transferred to the World Bank, I.M.F. and the W.T.O. and the time and energy of the United Nations and its specialised agencies was directed mainly to the discussion of social and humanitarian issues. This led to a division of labour between the World Bank, IMF and WTO on the one hand and the U.N. and its Specialised Agencies on the other, which was not envisaged in the Charter. This development has led some critics to comment that the United Nations today has become primarily a forum for prescribing self-help kits for developing countries. A similar shift also took place during this period in the development plans and policies of developing countries.

33. *Social Development Summit.* It was in this background that the World Summit for Social Development was held under the aegis of the United Nations in Copenhagen in March 1995. The Summit was most timely. It was a recognition at the highest political level of the *fait accompli* of the changes in development thinking towards greater emphasis on social development. It thus gave a seal of approval to these changes. It brought together different trends of thought evident in the field, tried to put them into an inter-disciplinary and coherent framework and developed global consensus as a guide for future national and international actions. The government leaders assembled at the Summit undertook commitments in major areas of social development and set goals and agreed on a Plan of Actions in each area. Since they could not have covered all sectors and issues of social development, they concentrated on three i.e. poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. These are all cross-cutting themes straddling a number of sectors and areas and covering several disciplines.

34. The Summit adopted a Declaration and a Programme of Action on Social Development. This was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations. At the Summit, the participants launched "a global drive for social programmes and development", embodying commitments taken in ten areas. These were:

a. Creating an enabling environment for social development.

b. Eradicating poverty

c. Promoting full employment.

d. Promoting social integration.

e. Achieving gender equality.

f. Identifying and deploying the means for tackling the problems of social development.

g. Addressing the special problem of Africa and the least developed countries in the field of social development.

h. Bringing World Bank/IMF sponsored structural adjustment programmes in harmony with the goals for social development.

i. Increasing the resources allotted to social development.

j. Achieving cooperation for social development at the sub- regional, regional and international levels.

35. In the Declaration, the Heads of State and Government recognised "the significance of social development.... for all and decided to give highest priority to the goals set out in the Declaration". They addressed the underlying and structural causes of the problems of social development and

their distressing consequences. They launched "a new commitment to social development" in each of their countries and "a new era of international cooperation" in this field.

36. They saw an intrinsic relationship between social development and peace. The Declaration states: "Social development and social justice are indispensable for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security within and among our nations. In turn peace and security and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are necessary for attaining social development and social justice."

37. They also emphasised the link between economic development, social development and environmental protection. They stated that these are "interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development". They recognized, in particular, that broad-based and sustained economic growth is necessary to sustain social development. Moreover, "equitable social development that recognized empowering the poor to utilize environmental resources sustainable is a necessary foundation for social development".

38. In the document adopted by the Summit, an attempt has been made to present a brief review of the current social situation. Progress in some areas of social and economic development has been noted. These include:

a. Global wealth of nations multiplied seven-fold during the 50 years before the Conference. International trade grew even more dramatically.

b. Life expectancy, literacy and primary education and access to basic health care increased in the majority of the countries. Average infant mortality came down considerably even in developing countries.

c. Democratic pluralism, democratic institutions and fundamental civil liberties expanded.

d. At the global level, one of the principal objectives of the United Nations, that is, decolonisation was substantially realised and dramatic progress was made towards the elimination of apartheid.

39. In spite of the progress, the social situation in most of the countries remained a matter of great concern. The following major nagging problems of social development were identified by the Summit.

a. The income gap increased both within and among nations.

b. One billion people were living in abject poverty. Most of them went hungry. A large proportion of them had limited access to income, resources, education, health care and nutrition.

c. Unsustainable pattern of consumption and production remained the major cause of the continued deterioration of the environment and the aggravation of poverty and imbalance.

d. 120 million people worldwide were unemployed and many more were under-employed.

e. More women than men lived in absolute poverty. Women carried a disproportionate share of the burden of poverty, social exclusion, unemployment, environmental degradation and effects of war.

f. Health services remained meagre and serious health problems arose because of the incidents of communicable diseases. These are hindrance to social development and causes of poverty and social exclusion.

g. Millions of people were reduced to the position of refugees or were internally displaced.

h. The problems of disability and old age were also matters of concern.

i. Transnational problems like drug trafficking, organised crime, arms trafficking, terrorism, armed conflicts, intolerance and xenophobia, and incitement of racial, ethnic and religious hatred, remained the major challenges for the international community.

40. A special session of the U.N.General Assembly was held in Geneva in June/July, 2002, to assess the achievements of and obstacles to social development and to decide on further initiatives for accelerating it. The participants in the Conference reaffirmed their will and commitment to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, which "will remain the basic framework for social development for years to come."

41. The document adopted in the Geneva Conference reviewed the progress in attaining the quantitative targets adopted at the Copenhagen summit in 13 areas of basic social services, including the flow of official development assistance. It concluded that progress in most of these areas remained meagre or unsatisfactory.

42. The Copenhagen Summit had pronounced its judgement on the implications of globalisation for social development. It stated that globalisation, while opening new opportunities for sustained economic growth and permitting countries to share experiences and learn from each other's experience with greater facility and speed, has been accompanied by intensified poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. Threats to human beings, such as environmental risks, have also been globalised. The challenge, therefore, is how to manage these processes and threats so as to enhance their benefits and mitigate their negative effects.

43. At the Geneva Conference, the implications of globalisation for social development were more sharply brought out. The document adopted at the Conference mentions that "current patterns of globalisation have contributed

to a sense of insecurity as some countries, particularly developing countries, have been marginalised from the global economy". Moreover, "the growing interdependence of nations which has caused economic shocks to be transmitted across national borders, as well as increased inequality, highlight weaknesses in current national and international institutional arrangements, and economic and social policies."

44. The Copenhagen Summit committed itself to "a political, economic, ethical and spiritual vision for social development that is based on human dignity, human rights, equity, respect, peace, democracy, multilateral responsibility and cooperation". The summit leaders adopted the following goals in the social field:

a. Placing people at the centre of development; and directing their economies to meet human needs.

b. Ensuring inter-generational equality by protecting the integrity and sustainable use of the environment.

c. Integrating economic, social and cultural policies.

d. Promoting democracy, human dignity, social justice and solidarity; and ensuring tolerance, non-violence, pluralism and non-discrimination.

e. Promoting equitable distribution of income.

f. Ensuring the inclusion of disadvantaged and vulnerable persons and groups in the process of social development.

g. Promoting universal respect for and observance and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

h. Protecting the rights of children and youth.

i. Empowering people - full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well being of societies.

j. Facilitating access to advanced technologies, particularly information technology, which can play a very important role in fulfilling social development goals.

k. Strengthening policies and programmes that improve, ensure and broaden the participation of women in all spheres of life, as equal partners.

# V. Enabling Environment for Social Development.

45. One of the Commitments adopted at the Summit was to create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development. To this end, the Summit adopted the following goals

a. To provide a stable legal framework which includes equality between men and women, respect for human rights, rule of law, access to justice, transparent and accountable governance and elimination of all forms of discrimination.

b. To provide more equitable access to income, resources and social services.

c. To promote participatory development through association of NGOs and civil society organisations and through decentralisation; and

d. To reinforce peace by promoting tolerance, non-violence and respect for diversity.

46. In the Plan of Action under this Commitment, it is stated that "social progress will not be realised simply through the free interaction of market forces. Public policies are necessary to correct market failures, to complement market mechanism, to maintain social stability and to create a national and international environment that promotes sustainable growth on a global scale".

47. Detailed recommendations have been made in the Plan of Action regarding the actions to be taken for creating an enabling environment for social development. These include: equitable and non-discriminatory distribution of the benefits of growth; interaction of market forces conducive to efficiency and social development; public policies that seek to overcome disparities and respect pluralism and diversity; strengthened role of the family; expanded access to education, health care services, information, knowledge and technology; increased solidarity, partnership and cooperation; policies for empowering people; and protection and conservation of the environment.

48. In the Geneva conference, the crucial role of the government in advancing people-centred sustainable development through actions to ensure increased equality and equity, and ensuring that markets function efficiently, were emphasised. The Conference also renewed commitment to efficient, transparent and accountable government and to decmocratic institutions.

# VI. Challenges of Social Development

## *A. Eradication of Poverty*

49. *Definition of Poverty.* : Poverty has generally been associated with paucity of income to meet basic needs. Most of the measures of poverty have used per capita income to identify people above and below the poverty line. However, mainly due to the thinking of Prof. Amartya Sen, poverty has come to be increasingly seen as deprivation of capability rather than merely lowness of income. However, income is clearly one of the major causes of poverty, since lack of income can be a principal reason for a person's capability deprivation.[13]

50. Prof. Amartya Sen brings out the advantages of capability approach to poverty. These are:[14]

    a. Poverty as capability deprivation concentrates on deprivations that are intrinsically important and not only instrumentally important. It brings out factors other than lowness of income which influence capability deprivation.

    b. Real poverty, i.e. poverty in terms of capability deprivation, may be in a significant sense more intense than what appears in the income space. This can be of crucial concern in assessing what public action is needed to target some particular groups or individuals.

    c. The capability deprivation approach to poverty enhances the understanding and causes of poverty by shifting primary attention away from means to ends.

    d. Distribution within the family raises further complications with the income approach to poverty. If the family income is used disproportionately in the interest of some family members and not others (for example, because of systematic boy preference) then the extent of deprivation of the neglected members (for example, the girls) may not be adequately reflected in terms of family income. The deprivation of girls is more readily checked by looking at capability deprivation (in terms of greater mortality, morbidity, under nourishment, medical neglect etc.,) than can be found in the income analysis.

51. The instrumental relations between low income and low capability is variable between different communities and even between different families and different individuals. The relationship between income and capability is strongly affected by the age of the person, by gender and social roles, by

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13 Amartya Sen. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 87-110.

14 Ibid. pp. 87-110.

location, by insecurity and by other variations over which a person may have no or only limited control.[15]

52. In the context of the definition of poverty as capability deprivation, Prof. Sen tries to link poverty with inequality. He states that inequality can have a negative effect on capability. Severe inequalities are not socially attractive. The sense of inequality may also erode cohesion and some types of inequalities can make it difficult to achieve even efficiency.

53. Prof. Sen argues that relative deprivation in terms of incomes can yield absolute deprivation in terms of capabilities. Being relatively poor in a rich country can be a great capability handicap even when one's absolute income is high in terms of world standards.

54. Prof. Sen concludes by observing that poverty debates have been distorted by an over-emphasis on income poverty and income inequality to the neglect of deprivations that relate to other variables, such as unemployment, ill health, lack of education and social exclusion.

55. The U.N.D.P. *Human Development Report, 1997*, devoted to the theme of poverty, focuses on the same dimensions of poverty as brought out by Prof. Sen in his definition of poverty as capability deprivation. However, in the HDR, 1997, the idea is sought to be linked to human development. It is stated that from the human development angle, poverty means denial of choices and opportunity for a tolerable life. It can mean more than what is necessary for material well being. It can also mean the denial and choices most basic to human development - to lead a healthy and productive life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and respect of others. The Report continues: for policy makers, the poverty of choices and opportunities is often more relevant than the poverty of income, for it focuses on the causes of poverty and leads directly to strategies of empowerment and other actions to enhance opportunities for every one.

56. In the Overview Chapter of the *World Development Report, 2000-2001*, also devoted to the theme of poverty, poverty has been defined in terms of "multiple deprivations". These include deprivation of fundamental freedoms of action and choice, lack of adequate food, shelter, education and health, extreme vulnerability to ill health, economic dislocation and natural disasters, ill treatment by institutions of the State and the society, and powerlessness in influencing decisions affecting the life of the poor. Since the problem has multiple dimensions, the solution has also to be multi-dimensional.

57. *Extent of global poverty*: The Human Development Report, 1997, reports progress in reducing poverty over the 20th century. In the past 50 years, poverty has fallen more than in the previous 500 years and it has been reduced in some respects in almost all countries.

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15 Ibid. pp. 87-110

58. Since 1960, in little more than a generation, child death rates in developing countries have been more than halved. Malnutrition rates have declined by almost a third. The proportion of children out of primary schools has fallen from more than half to less than a quarter. And the share of rural families without access to safe water has fallen from 9/10th to about a quarter.

59. By the end of the 20th century, some 3 to 4 billions of the world's people will have experienced substantial improvements in their standards of living and about 4 to 5 billion will have access to basic health and education.

60. China and East and South East Asian countries have made the most spectacular progress in reducing poverty. China reduced its poverty from 33 per cent to 7 per cent between 1978-1994, Malaysia from 60 to 14 per cent between 1970-1993, Indonesia from 60 to 15 per cent between 1970-1990 and the Republic of Korea from 23 to 5 per cent during the same period.

61. Between 1970 and 1995, the largest reductions in the adult illiteracy rate took place in the Republic of Korea (from 12% to 2%), Thailand (21% to 6%), the Phillippines (17% to 5%), Indonesia (46% to 16%) and Cuba (13% to 4%).

62. However, the advances made have been uneven and marked by setbacks. Poverty still remains pervasive. Nearly a billion people were illiterate at the time of the writing of the Report, well over a billion lacked access to safe water, some 840 million went hungry or faced food insecurity.[16]

63. The U.N.D.P. *Human Development Report, 1997*, introduced a Human Poverty Index (HPI). Instead of measuring poverty by income, it uses indicators of the most basic dimensions of deprivation i.e. short life, lack of basic education and lack of access to public and private resources. The finding of the Report was that more than a quarter of the developing world's people still lived in poverty as measured by this index. About a third lived on incomes of less than 1 dollar a day. Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest proportion of people in human poverty. Among these broad groups, the children, women and aged suffered most. Some 160 million children were moderately or severely malnourished. Some 100 million were out of school.

64. A comparison of the HPI with income measurement of poverty based on 1 dollar a day poverty line, revealed the following interesting contrasts:-

a. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia had the highest incidents of both income and human poverty.

b. Most of the Arab States had made remarkable progress in reducing income poverty, at that time a mere 4 per cent; but faced a large backlog of human poverty (32 per cent).

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16 United Nations Development Programme. 1977. *Human Development Report 1977*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

c. `Many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean had reduced human poverty, which was 15 per cent; but income poverty was still 24 per cent.

65. The *World Development Report (2000-2001)* in its Overview Chapter gives the latest available data on the extent of poverty at the international level. Of the world's 6 billion people - 2.8 billion - almost half - live on less than 2 dollars a day and 1.2 billion - a fifth - live on less than 1 dollar a day. In rich countries, fewer than one child in 100 do not reach its fifth birthday, but in the poorest countries as many as a fifth of the children do not. While in rich countries, fewer than 5 per cent of all children under 5 are malnutritioned, in poor countries, as many as 50 per cent are.

66. However, there are regional variations. In East Asia, the number of people living on less than 1 dollar a day fell from around 420 million to around 280 million between 1987 and 1998, even after the setbacks of the financial crisis. But in Latin America, South Asia, and the Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of poor people have been rising. In European and Central Asian countries in transition to market economy, the number of people living on less than a dollar a day rose more than 24-fold. Experiences are also vastly different at sub-national levels and for ethnic minorities and women.

67. *Eradicating Poverty – Approaches & Measures*. One of the 10 Commitments undertaken at the Social Development Summit was on "eradicating poverty." It was also one of the three main themes of social development round which the Summit was organised. Among the manifestations of poverty recognised in the Action Plan under this Commitment are:

a. Lack of income and productive sources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood; hunger and malnutrition; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environment; and social discrimination and exclusion.

b. Women bear a disproportionate share of the burden of poverty as do other disadvantaged groups. The Summit asserts that poverty cannot be eradicated by anti-poverty programmes alone. It will require democratic participation, changes in economic structures and access of all to resources and public services.

c. Absolute poverty has been defined in the Action Plan as a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs. Among the measures suggested for the removal of absolute poverty are: eliminating hunger and malnutrition, providing food security, education, employment, health services, safe drinking water, sanitation and shelter; ensuring poor people's access to resources i.e. credit, land, education, technology, knowledge and information; ensuring adequate economic and social protection; and removing inequality.

68. The U.N.D.P. *Human Development Report, 1997* puts emphasis more or less on the same measures. However, it attaches much greater importance to the empowerment of people and to institutional factors, like political commitment to promote and protect the rights of the poor people and policy reforms to enable them to gain access to assets and security of tenure. Like other reports, this HDR also regards gender equality as absolutely essential for eradicating poverty. This would involve focussing clearly on ending discrimination against girls in all aspects of health, education and upbringing; empowering women by ensuring equal rights and access to land, credit and job opportunities; and taking action to end violence against women.

69. Globalisation, according to the HDR, offers great opportunities for reducing poverty but only if it is managed more carefully and with greater concern for global equity. Globalisation has seen a widening gap between winners and losers in both developed and developing countries. Therefore, better management of globalisation both nationally and internationally, in terms, amongst others, of improved access of the poor and weak countries to the markets of the developed countries, is called for.

70. Among international measures for reducing poverty, the Report attaches priority to debt relief, larger flow of resources, and the opening up of the markets of developed countries for products of developing countries.

71. Preparatory to the Geneva Conference, the U.N.D.P. prepared a Poverty Report, 2000 under the title Overcoming Human Poverty. The Report was designed to contribute to U.N. General Assembly's review of the progress in the implementation of the Commitments of the Social Summit and to help accelerate the collective campaign against poverty in the next five years. The review was related mainly to the implementation of measures recommended under Commitment 2, Eradicating Poverty, undertaken at the Social Summit.

72. A brief summary of the progress made, the implications of measures that have been taken and can be taken, and measures recommended in the Report are given below:

a. *Commitment to reduce poverty*. Some progress was made in estimating poverty but there was little progress in setting targets.

b. *Integrating poverty reduction programmes into national development plans*. The Summit made this recommendation because it is an evidence of the national commitment to eradicate poverty and also an evidence of explicit location of resources to this task as well as of the determination to mobilise additional resources. Only a few governments took measures in pursuit of this recommendation.

c. *Linking poverty to international policies*. Such a link is seen mainly in terms of tackling the problem of external debt, harnessing trade for poverty

reduction and making aid work for the poor. The record on all these counts was not very encouraging.

d. *Governance as a missing link*. When governments are unaccountable or corrupt, poverty reduction programmes have little success in targetting the poor. Corruption deprives the poor of an equitable share of society's resources and indirectly reduces the opportunities for poverty reduction by dampening economic growth. Having regular and free and fair elections can boost accountability. But government officials must be made accountable also between elections. For this, people have to organise themselves.

e. *Organising the poor*.

e.1. The foundation of poverty reduction is for the poor to organise themselves. This will enable them to influence the local government and hold it accountable. Through their organisation the poor can form coalitions with other social forces and build broader organisations to influence regional and national policy making. What the poor need most are resources to build their organisational capacity.

e.2. Civil societies can play a very important role in this. The most common use of civil society is to entrust them with the delivery of goods and services where local governments cannot do it effectively. But this may not be advisable over the long term. For, the capacity of the government to deliver goods and services must be built up. In fact, the civil society organisations can perform a better function by representing the poor and in their advocacy role when national and local governments are unresponsive, rather than by serving as a channel for delivering goods and services. They should engage national policy makers on poverty issues. The strategic goal should be to forge an alliance between the State and civil society for poverty reduction.

f. *Formulating and implementing pro-poor poverty programmes*. Pro-poor poverty programmes should not have a separate existence of their own. They should be integrated with the micro-economic policies of the government. In the ultimate analysis, the focussing of resources on the poor can be achieved best by empowering the poor and for this the poor have to be organised. However, parallel macro-economic policies should be so framed as to confer direct benefits on the poor. This could be done, for example, by:

f.1. *Focusing on geographical areas where the poor are dominant.* The deficiency of this approach is that it may include many non-poor households, which could lead to a significant leakage of benefits.

f.2. *Targetting households or communities.* This is a very labourious process and to achieve this an active collaboration of the poor is

needed. Besides, the latest thinking on human poverty shifts emphasis from the household to the individual - to identify deprivation among, say, women and children. There is also a shift of emphasis to specific interventions to address specific deprivations.

f.3. *Reaching disadvantaged social groups.*

f.4. *Targetting by type of intervention*, that is, to concentrate on projects which can have the direct effect of benefiting the poor, like providing schools for elementary education, child clinics, micro-finance etc. However, these interventions have not always proved successful in reaching the poor. They have also overlooked such measures as economic policy making or institution building.

f.5. *Access to basic social services.* An enhanced supply of services does not necessarily ensure that it will go to the poor. Poverty programme should, therefore, focus not merely on providing services meant for the poor but also on ensuring that the poor are able to take advantage of them.

f.6. *Micro-finance*. Micro-finance no doubt contributes to community empowerment but it can be captured by local political elites. Moreover, the hard core poor, having few assets, are reluctant to take on the risk of credit. For example, in Bangladesh, which is a pioneer in micro-finance, only a fourth of micro-finance clients are hard core poor.

f.7. *Supplying physical infrastructures in poor regions*, like rural roads, irrigation works, drinking water systems etc. China's anti-poverty programme is very much distinguished by an emphasis on developing infrastructure in the poor regions. However, in this approach, those better off and closer to towns and existing roads, usually benefit more than the poor.

f.8. Much of the success of infrastructure projects depends on whether communities are involved in selecting them. The advantage of this approach is that unlike micro-credit, wage employment carries little risk and, therefore, in many regions only hard core poor gravitate to the construction jobs in infrastructure projects.

g. *Integrated approach to poverty programme.* A general weakness of most poverty programmes has been lack of integration. The problem is particularly severe with regard to integration with gender and environmental issues. There are also weak links between protecting health and reducing poverty. Gender equality does not figure prominently as a source of poverty in most poverty programmes. Nor do gender programmes focus on poverty. Combating gender inequality is not regarded as the same as combating poverty.

h. *Monitoring poverty programmes*. Not much progress has been made in this area. Most of the developing countries still need a workable poverty monitoring system to assess progress towards the target of eradicating extreme poverty and reducing over-all poverty. For this, participatory poverty assessment is particularly useful. Besides, most poverty monitoring systems continue to rely on income poverty measures. This needs to be broadened.

73. The Geneva Conference regarded poverty eradication as "an ethical, social and economic imperative of humankind". A target was set for reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by one half by the year 2015. This was basically the reiteration of the target agreed in the Millenium Session of the U.N. General Assembly. The Geneva Conference reiterated most of the measures recommended by the Summit. However, it put emphasis on those measures which can have direct impact on the amelioration of the conditions of the poor. These included: using employment policies to reduce poverty, improving productivity in the informal sector, increasing and facilitating the development of cooperatives among the poor, encouraging sustainable rural development, especially in areas like agricultural production, encouraging the growth of small and medium size enterprises by formulating a consistent long term policy to support them, promoting small business and self-employment for rural workers in view of increasing rural poverty, landlessness and urban rural migration.

74. Most of these measures would seem to fly against the face of the reforms recommended under the structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and I.M.F. The consensus arrived at the Geneva Conference, with the participation of governments and NGOs, is a truer reflection of the perception of the vast majority of the countries in the world on what needs to be done for eradicating poverty than that recommended under the Washington Consensus. This also reflects the strong urge in these countries to protect the small farmers and enterprises and informal sectors against the onslaught of globalisation.

75. The Geneva Conference also put considerable emphasis on institutional factors for combating poverty. It emphasised the role of the N.G.Os and civil society organisations in ensuring community participation in the formulation and implementation of poverty reduction strategies and programmes. It recommended that institutional mechanism that ensured a multi-sectoral approach to poverty eradication should be established and strengthened.

76. On the role of gender equality for reducing poverty, it recommended that the potential role of women in poverty eradication should be kept in mind and appropriate measures should be taken to counter the "feminisation of poverty."

77. The *World Development Report, 2000-2001*, recognises that poverty is "the result of economic, political and social processes that interact with each other and frequently reinforce each other in ways that exacerbate the

deprivation in which poor people live". Meagre assets, inaccessible markets and scarce job opportunities lock people in material poverty. That is why, the Report says, promoting opportunity by stimulating economic growth, making markets work better for the poor people and building up their assets is key to reducing poverty.

78. Thus, the report sails quite close to the Washington consensus of market-induced and growth- centred approach to poverty eradication. At different places in the Report, emphasis is put on recognising the central role of the market, poor people's participation in the market, encouraging private investment and export-led growth. However, in the year 2000-2001, it was not possible for the World Bank to have not acknowledged the new and much broader definition of poverty enunciated in the latest thinking on the subject, and the desirability of adopting measures on a much broader front, geared to the tackling of poverty as capacity deprivation. Therefore, the World Bank Report adopts a comprehensive strategy for attacking poverty, the main elements of which are `security', `empowerment' and `opportunity'. The very title of the Overview Chapter includes `empowerment' as an element of the strategy. Security is not defined in the narrow sense of providing social security net for those who are rendered unemployed or otherwise marginalised during the reform process, but includes the security of millions of those suffering under structural poverty. Recommendations made in the Report under the headings of the three elements are set in the broader context of the new definition of poverty. Among measures for enhancing security are included micro-insurance and micro-finance and not reducing expenditure in the social sector during the period of adjustment or crisis management. The heading `social empowerment' includes transparency in governance, sound legal system, decentralisation, gender equality, removal of social exclusion and combating corruption.

79. The Report also considerably modifies the main thrusts of the World Bank's structural adjustment programmes by putting emphasis on such measures as encouraging micro-enterprises, small businesses and small farmers, land reforms, building infrastructure in core areas, facilitating poor people's access to energy, complementary public investment in social and physical infrastructure and exercising prudence in moving towards capital account convertibility.

80. The Report makes bold to state that various targets set by the United Nations in the area of poverty elimination are unrealistic. It cites figures relating to the current level of achievement to argue the point.

81. There is an interesting section in the Report summarising how the strategy for poverty reduction has evolved over the last 50 years in response to a deepening understanding of the complexity of the problem of development. In the 1950s and 1960s, many viewed large investments in physical capital and infrastructure as a primary means of development. In the 1970s, awareness grew that physical capital was not enough and that health and education were at least as important. The 1980s saw another shift in

emphasis, following the debt crisis and global recession, towards improving economic management and allowing greater play for market forces. The World Development Report, 1990, devoted to the poverty issue, proposed a two-part strategy: promoting labour-intensive growth through economic openness and investment in infrastructure, and providing basic services to the poor people in health and education. In the 1990s,governance and institutions moved centre stage, as did the issues of vulnerability at the local and national levels.

## *B. Gender Equality*

82. Gender equality has emerged as a key variant for ensuring the desired outcome through activities in the field of social development, particularly in the areas of education, health and nutrition and for dealing with the problems of poverty and unemployment. The present almost universal recognition of the importance of gender equality in social development represents a veritable revolution. The U.N.D.P. Human Development Report, 1995, the principal theme of which is gender equality, regards "the recognition of equal rights of women and the determination to combat discrimination on the basis of gender" as "achievements equal in importance to the abolition of slavery, elimination of colonialism and the establishment of equal rights for racial and ethnic minorities." The report has this well-known aphorism: "Human development, if not engendered, is endangered".

83. Prof. Amartya Sen is a strong believer in the importance of women's empowerment for bringing about social change. He states that women are no longer the passive recipient of social welfare; they are increasingly seen as an active agent of change: the dynamic promoters of social transformation that can alter the life of both women and men.[17]

84. Professor Sen draws from empirical studies to demonstrate the connection between women's empowerment on the one hand and child's survival and fertility on the other hand. He states that it is striking that demographically backward regions of India, where mortality and morbidity are high, tend to be those where gender relations are highly unequal. Conversely, States which have experienced rapid progress in improving health and reducing mortality and fertility are often those where women have played far more an active role in society. Given the gender division of labour that prevails in most of India, nutrition, child health, and related matters typically depend primarily on women's decisions and actions. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that social achievements in this domain are more impressive where women are better educated, more resourceful, more valued, more influential and generally more equal agents within the household and in society.[18]

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17 Amartya Sen. 1999. *Development as Freedom*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 189-203.

18 Ibid. pp. 189-203.

85. There is considerable evidence to show that the fertility rate tends to come down with greater empowerment of women and that women's education and literacy tend to reduce the mortality rates of children. It works through the importance that mothers typically attach to the welfare of the children and the opportunities that the mothers have, when they are respected and empowered, to influence family decisions in that direction. Female literacy is found to have an unambiguous statistically significant reducing aspect on under-5 mortality. High levels of female literacy and labour force participation by women are strongly associated with lower level of family disadvantage in child survival.[19]

86. By contrast, variables that relate to the general level of development and modernisation either turn out to have no statistically significant effect or suggest that modernisation can even strengthen, rather than weaken, the general bias in child survival. Statistics also show that male literacy or general poverty reduction have comparatively ineffective roles to play as instruments of child mortality reduction. Thus the same variables relating to women's empowerment, in this case their literacy, plays a much more important role in promoting social well-being than variables relating to the general level of populace in societies. Women's empowerment improves not only their condition but also the condition of everyone in the family.[20]

87. Prof. Sen brings this out very convincingly by analysing how a change in the arrangement in sharing within the family in favour of women can enhance the welfare of all the members of the family. The arrangement for sharing within the family is to a great extent done by established conventions, but they are at the same time influenced by such factors as the economic role and empowerment of women and the value system of the community at large. In the evolution of value systems and conventions within the family, an important role can be played by female education, female employment and ultimately ownership rights and thus social features can be very crucial for the economic fortunes of all members of the family. Distributional problems within the family are particularly crucial in determining the general under-nourishment and hunger of different members of the family in situations of persistent poverty. It is the continued inequality in the division of food - and perhaps even more so in that of health care - that gender inequality manifests itself most blatantly and persistently in poor societies with a strong anti-female bias. On the other hand, there is considerable evidence to show that when women can and do earn income outside the household, they stand to enhance their relative position even in the distribution within the household. Thus the freedom to seek outside jobs can contribute to the reduction of women’s relative and absolute deprivation. Freedom in one area seems to help foster freedom in others.[21]

88. Prof. Sen draws a distinction between what he calls the "agency" aspect of women's movements and its "well-being" aspect. By "agency" he means the

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19 Ibid. pp. 189-203.
20 Ibid. pp. 189-203.
21 Ibid. pp. 189-203.

combination of all factors which make women the agent of social transformation. He brings out the inter-relationship between these two aspects. He states that agency aspect plays a very important role in removing the inequities that depress the well being of women. Empirical studies have brought out how the relative respect and regard for women's well-being is strongly influenced by such variables as women's ability to earn an independent income, to find employment outside the home, to have ownership rights, to have literacy, and be educated participants in decisions within and outside the family.[22]

89. Gender inequality does not decline automatically with the progress of economic growth. In fact, in some cases there is an inverse relationship between the two. Secondly, gender inequality is not only a social failure in itself, but also it leads to other social failures. [23]

90. An innovation in the U.N.D.P. *Human Development Report, 1995,* was the inclusion in it of a Gender-related Development Index (GDI) reflecting gender disparity in basic human capabilities. The variables taken into account for developing the GDI were women's empowerment, literacy rates among women vis-a-vis men, combined enrolment for females, life expectancy and women's earned income. The Report reveals the following facts

a. Poverty has a woman's face - of the 1.3 billion people in poverty, 70 per cent were women. The increasing poverty among women is linked to their nequal situation in labour market, their treatment under social welfare systems and their status and power in the family.

b. Women's labour force participation has risen by only 4 percentage points in 20 years i.e. from 36 per cent in 1970 to 40 per cent in 1990.

c. Women receive a disproportionately small share of credit from formal banking institutions.

d. Women normally receive a much lower average wage than men.

e. All regions recorded a higher level of unemployment among women than men.

91. In addition to the GDI, the 1995 HDR introduced another concept called Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), which looks at women's representation in parliaments, women's share of positions classified as managerial and professional, women's participation in the active labour force and their share of national income. The Report grades the countries of the world according to this measure.

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22 Ibid. pp. 189-203

23 Ibid. pp. 189-203.

92. The Report also points out that a major index of neglect of women is that many of women's economic contributions are grossly undervalued or not valued at all. The contributions not valued may very well be in the order of 11 trillion dollars a year.

93. Finally it brings out that the most painful devaluation of women is the physical and psychological violence that stalks them from cradle to grave.

94. One of the Commitments undertaken at the Copenhagen Social Development Summit was on "gender equality". Under this Commitment, the participating countries have subscribed to the objective of promoting "full respect for human dignity of women, achieving equality between men and women and empowering women in Summit set the following goals:

a. Full and equal access of women to literacy, education, training, credit and other productive resources.

b. Removal of obstacles to their ability to buy, sell and hold property and land.

c. Equitable access to public goods and services.

d. Enhancement of equality of status, welfare, and opportunity of the girl child.

e. Promoting equal partnership between men and women in family and community life.

f. Combating and eliminating all forms of discrimination, exploitation, abuse and violence against women and girl children.

g. Establishing structures, policies, objectives and goals to ensure gender balance and equity in decision taking processes at all levels.

95. The Geneva Conference underlined that participation in leadership role of women in all spheres should be recognised and enhanced. The Copenhagen Summit recommended the integration of the gender perspective in the design and implementation of all policies of development The Geneva Conference embraced the same idea but put it somewhat differently i.e. the need for "mainstreaming of gender considerations in all levels of policy making".

96. As a follow up of the Millennium Session of the General Assembly, the Geneva conference reiterated the targets set at that session, i.e.

a. Ensuring free, compulsory and universal primary education for both boys and girls by 2015.

b. Achieving 50 per cent improvement in the level of adult literacy by 2015; and

c. Closing the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005.

97. The Geneva Conference set the objective of promoting the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls. Governments should ensure that human rights of women and girls are respected and promoted. Another additional commitment undertaken at the Geneva conference was to increase the participation of women and bring about a balanced representation of men and women in all sectors and occupations in the labour market and close the gender gap in earnings.

98. The U.N.D.P. *Human Development Report, 1995* identified a 5-point strategy for accelerating progress towards achieving gender equality:

a. National and international efforts must be mobilised to win legal quality within a definite period, say the next ten years;

b. Many economic and institutional arrangements may need revamping to extend more chances to women than men in the work place;

c. A threshold limit must be fixed as minimum share of women in decision-making at the national level (this could be, say, 30 per cent);

d. Key programmes should embrace universal family education,

e. National and international efforts should target programmes that enable women to gain greater access to economic and political opportunities through basic social services and through credit for the poor.

## *C. Human Rights*

99. Recently human rights have emerged as a very important under-pinning of the objectives of human development. Human rights have acquired a truly universal character in that they flow from the dignity that is attached to human being. This essentially modernistic concept has deep religious roots. Rabindra Nath Tagore in his book *Religion of Man* has observed that what is most striking is the divinity of the human being and the humanity of the divine. This is what lends dignity to human being and makes for the unity of humankind.

100. Looked at from this angle, human rights cannot be culture-specific as has been claimed by some Asian intellectuals and political leaders. They have invoked the distinctive nature of the Asian values as a justification for not accepting human rights as a universal value. In this connection, they have particularly referred to the Confucian culture where the focus is on discipline rather than on rights, on loyalty rather than on entitlement. Prof. Amartya Sen does not agree with this "cultural critique" of human rights. He says that generalisations about Asia are not easy, given its size. There are no quintessential values that apply to the immensely large Asian population,

which separates them out from people in the rest of the world. Besides, Confucianism is not the only tradition in Asia. [24]

101. In the last couple of decades, we have witnessed the expanding horizon of human rights. Traditionally, human rights concentrated on the right of the individual. Subsequently, it expanded to cover the rights of communities, ethnic groups, and distinctly marginalised and neglected groups like women, children and the aged. Traditionally human rights were more or less identical with political rights; now they have been extended to cover social and economic rights.

102. In his criticism of the "coherence critique" and the "legitimacy critique" of human rights, Prof. Sen has widened the horizon of human rights still further. According to the "legitimacy critiques", there are no inborn human rights and they have to be acquired through legislation. Prof. Sen finds this thesis as militating "in a rather fundamental way against the basic idea of universal human rights". According to him, human rights can be effectively invoked in the context even where their legal enforcement would appear to be most inappropriate. For example, the moral right of a wife to participate fully as an equal in serious family decisions may be acknowledged by many who nevertheless want this right not to be legalised or imposed. Prof. Sen argues that it is best to see human rights as a "set of ethical claims", which must not be identified with legal rights. [25]

103. According to the "coherence critique", one cannot talk about human rights without specifying whose duty it is to guarantee the fulfillment of the rights. In this view, rights can be sensibly formulated only in combination with co-related duties. Prof. Sen dismisses this critique on the ground that human rights can be addressed to any one who can help, even though no particular person or agency can be charged to bring about the fulfillment of the rights involved. He says, "it is surely possible for us to make a distinction between a right that a person has which has not been fulfilled and the right that a person does not have." Thus human rights can be seen as an entitlement, power, or immunity that benefits all who have them, even though they may not be legally guaranteed or it may not be possible to assign responsibilities on individuals or agents for guaranteeing them. The very fact of the articulation of these rights can result in the widening of freedom and can help to mobilise support from a great many people. [26]

104. Social development or human development on the one hand and human rights on the other share a common vision and a common purpose - that is, to ensure the freedom, well-being and dignity of all people everywhere. They are both about securing basic freedoms which may include:

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24 Ibid. pp.227-248.
25 Ibid. pp. 227-248.
26 Ibdi. pp.87-110.

a. Freedom from discrimination by gender, race, ethnicity, national origin or religion;

b. Freedom from want - to enjoy a decent standard of living;

c. Freedom to develop and realise one's human potential;

d. Freedom from fear - from physical violence, from threats to personal security, from torture, from arbitrary arrest and other violent act;

e. Freedom from injustice and violation of the rules of law;

f. Freedom of thought and speech and to participate in decision making and to form associations.

g. Freedom for decent work without exploitation.

105. If human development focuses on the enhancement of the capabilities and freedoms that the members of the community want to enjoy, human rights represent the claims that individuals have on the conduct of other individuals and collective agents and on the design of social arrangements to facilitate or secure these capabilities and freedoms.

106. Human rights can add value to the agenda of human development. These rights direct legal tools as a means to secure freedom and human development. The rights also lend moral legitimacy and the principle of social justice to the objective of human development. The rights perspectives help shift the priority to the most deprived and excluded, especially to deprivation because of discrimination. It also directs attention to the need for information and a political voice for all people.

107. The human rights approach may offer an additional and more useful perspective for the analysis of human development. This approach links the human development approach to the idea that others have duties to facilitate and enhance human development. For example, when we assert right to education we are not only saying that all are entitled to a free elementary education but we are also saying that there must be some culpability somewhere in the social system. Thus the focus on locating accountability for failures within a social system can be a powerful tool for seeking remedies.

108. Concern with duties enhances the ways of judging the nature and demands of programmes. Since the process of human development often involves great struggle, the empowerment involved in the language of rights can be of great practical importance. Human rights analysis thus involves an assessment of the extent to which institutions and social norms that provide security to human development achievements within a society are in place.

109. The profound concern of the human rights literature with the duties of others in helping each human being live a better and less unfree life is thus quite

relevant to considering both the ways and means of promoting human development.

110. Human development in turn brings a dynamic long term perspective to the fulfillment of rights. It directs attention to the socio-economic context in which rights can be realised. The concepts and tools of human development provide a systematic assessment of the economic and institutional constraints to the realisation of rights. Human development thus contributes to building a long term strategy for the realisation of rights.

111. Gains in human development are not always attended by gains in human rights fulfillment and, therefore, human development accounting may fail to pick up on the vulnerability of individuals and groups within a society. For example, the instability of the market combined with inadequate social security provisions exposed the insecurity of East Asia's human development gains.

112. By attending to the process of human development, an idea can be gained as to how far it is feasible to achieve human rights given the resources and the institutional constraints that prevail within a society. All rights cannot be fulfilled simultaneously even though they are all valid and sacrosanct. The fulfillment of several rights depends upon structural changes and on programmes for social and economic transformation to which human developments contributes a great deal.

113. The idea of human development involves change. Its concern is with progress. The insistence on a dynamic view can be particularly useful in considering human rights over time. For example, when a country is poor it cannot fulfil all its human rights obligations. In this way, there may be some human rights that receive priority even though all human rights ultimately have value and importance. By adding the perspective of change and progress for conceptual and practical reasoning about human rights, human development can help to deepen the understanding and broaden the usefulness of the human rights approach. It is already recognised that some rights must be only progressively realised, and not overnight. This underlines the need for establishing priorities among human rights.

114. The Human Development Report, 2000, of the UNDP is devoted to human rights and human development. It analyses the relationship between human rights and human development, traces the evolution of human rights since the adoption in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and outlines the challenges of and recommends measures for achieving the universal realisation of human rights in the 21st century. The Report stipulates that all rights for all people in all countries should be the goal of the 21st century. It recommends the following measures:-

a. Every country needs to strengthen its social arrangements for securing human rights consisting of norms, institutions, legal framework and enabling economic environment. Legislation alone is not enough. Human rights education should be used as the most important tool.

b. The fulfillment of human rights requires democracy that is inclusive, that protects the rights of the minorities, provides separation of powers and ensures public accountability. Elections alone are not enough.

c. Poverty eradication is the central challenge for human rights in the 21st century. It should be seen not only as a development goal, but also as social justice.

d. Human rights require State and central model of accountability as well as obligation of non-state actors, and states' obligations beyond national borders.

e. Information and statistics are a powerful tool for creating a culture of accountability and for realizing human rights. At the national level it will be necessary to assess the existing human rights situation and to set priorities for action. National legislation against core international human rights should be reviewed to identify areas where action is needed to deal with gaps and contradictions.

f. Education and media should be used to promote the norms of human rights and an economic environment should be created for enabling people to realise human rights.

g. Human rights and human development cannot be realised universally without stronger international action, especially to support disadvantaged peoples and countries and to offset growing global inequalities and marginalisation. For this purpose, the following priorities are set - strengthening a right-based approach to development cooperation, without conditionalities; larger flow of aid; debt relief; access to markets; access to private financial flows and stability in the world economy.

115. The Report suggests that some major shifts in emphasis are required from the earlier Cold War thinking:-

a. from State-centred approaches to pluralistic - multi-actors approaches;

b. from national to international and global accountabilities;

c. from the focus on civil and political rights to a broad concern for all rights, giving equal attention to economic, social and cultural rights; and

d. from a punitive to a positive ethos in international pressure and assistance.

## D. *Social Integration*

116. The promotion of social integration was one of the principal themes of the Copenhagen Social Summit. This was also the theme of one of the Commitments undertaken at the Summit.

117. The aim of social integration under this Commitment is to create " a society for all" in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play. Such an inclusive society must be based on respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, cultural and religious diversity, social justice, democratic participation and rule of law.

118. The positive factors for integration identified in this part of the Summit document are: decolonisation; elimination of apartheid; spread of democracy; wider recognition of the need to respect human dignity, all human rights and cultural diversity; unacceptability of discrimination; extended opportunities in health, education and economic development; globalisation of communications; and greater possibilities of social mobility, choice and autonomy of action.

119. The negative factors identified are: social polarisation and fragmentation; widening disparities and inequalities; uncontrolled urban development; degradation of the environment; marginalisation of people, families, social groups, communities, and entire countries; strains on individuals, families, communities and institutions as a result of the rapid pace of social change; economic transformation; migration and major dislocations of population.

120. The document also identifies violence, including domestic violence, especially against women and children and older people and disabled, as a growing threat to the security of individuals and families and communities everywhere. Total social breakdown, organised crime, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, trafficking in women and children, ethnic and religious conflicts, civil war, terrorism and xenophobia and genocide are identified as factors presenting fundamental threats to societies and the global social order.

121. The document identifies groups which find themselves excluded. Special measures are recommended for each of these groups. These are women, children, aged, the disabled, the indigenous people and the migrants.

122. Following are some of the major goals for achieving social integration, set by the Summit:

a. Promoting respect for democracy, the rule of law, pluralism, diversity, tolerance, non-violence and solidarity.

b. Eliminating discrimination and fostering respect for human dignity.

c. Ensuring equality and non-discrimination.

d. Ensuring respect for rights and promoting access to education, information and technology.

e. Addressing the problems of crime, violence and drug trafficking as factors of social disintegration.

123. Among the means suggested are inter-generational dialogue and strengthening institutions that enhance social integration. Here a very important role is assigned to the family.

124. The Summit underlines the importance of the fulfillment of the following conditions for achieving social integration:-

a. Transparent and accountable public institutions that are accessible to people on an equal basis.

b. Opportunities for all to participate in public life.

c. Strengthening the participation and involvement of the civil society.

d. Right to information.

e. Maintenance of social stability and promotion of social justice and progress.

f. Non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunities and social mobility.

g. Gender equality and empowerment of women.

h. Mutual support.

125. Detailed measures are recommended under each of the above headings in the Action Plan.

126. In the light of the developments during the five years after the Copenhagen Summit, the Geneva Conference adds some new measures in its recommendations for securing social integration:-

a. Encouraging sustained investment in social institutions and social capital and enhancing social network.

b. Ensuring an enabling environment for civil society organisations.

c. Promoting the contribution that volunteerism can make to the creation of caring societies.

d. Encouraging the media to contribute to the promotion of social integration and use of the internet and other forms of information technology for this purpose.

e. Identifying and taking measures to counter the increasing dissemination of child pornography and other obscene materials, intolerance, hatred, racism, xenophobia, incitement to violence, discrimination based on sex, through the media and information technology.

## E. *Employment*

127. One of the Commitments undertaken by the governments participating at the Copenhagen Social Summit is to promote full employment as a basic priority of economic and social policies. Under this Commitment, productive work and employment are recognised as "central elements of development as well as decisive elements of human identity." Full and adequately remunerative employment is an effective method of eliminating poverty and promoting social integration. If poverty is defined as capability deprivation, then unemployment is a major factor for such deprivation.

128. Prof. Amartya Sen argues that if income loss were all that were involved in unemployment, then that loss could to a great extent be erased by income support. If, however, unemployment has other serious effects on the lives of the individuals, causing deprivation of other kinds, then the amelioration through income support would be to that extent limited. There is plenty of evidence to show that unemployment has many harmful effects other than loss of income, including psychological harm, loss of work motivation, skill and self-confidence, increase in ailment and morbidity, disruption of family relations and social life, hardening of social exclusion, accentuation of racial discrimination and gender asymmetries.

129. The Summit sets the following goals for promoting full employment:-

a. Putting employment at the centre of development strategy.

b. Developing policies to expand work opportunities, particularly through economic growth, investment in human resource development, promotion of employment-generating technologies and encouragement of self-employment.

c. Improving access to land, credit and other assets.

d. Putting special emphasis on education and training and promoting workers' rights.

130. The Plan of Action spells out detailed measures under each of the above headings. Among workers' rights, emphasis is laid on human rights, healthy and safe working environment, removal of exploitation, abolition of child labour, and full participation of women in the labour market place.

131. Separate recommendations have been made on enhancing employment opportunities for groups with special needs, particularly the disadvantaged ones like women, children, disabled, indigenous people, displaced persons and migrant workers.

132. There is also emphasis on the importance of acknowledging the important contribution of UN-remunerated work to the well being of the society and bringing respect, dignity and value to such work and people who do it. For this purpose, it is important to develop more comprehensive knowledge of such work through research.

133. Importance of small and medium size enterprises and of the informal sector is emphasised as a source of growth in employment in developing countries. This leads to the recommendation that obstacles to the operation of such enterprises be removed and support be provided for their establishment.

134. In the Geneva Conference, special emphasis is laid on the prohibition of child labour. Governments are urged to support and participate in the global campaign for the immediate elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

# VII. Means for Tackling the Problems of Social Development

135. The participants in the Copenhagen Summit Conference undertook a separate Commitment on the means for dealing with the problems of social development. Among the means identified are education, health, removing inequalities, respect for culture, and people-centred sustainable development. The governments participating at the Summit have committed themselves to promoting and attaining the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education; the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health; access of all to primary health care; making particular efforts to rectify inequalities relating to social conditions and without distinction as to race, national origin, gender, age or disability; respecting and promoting common and particular cultures; striving to strengthen the role of culture in development; preserving the essential basis of people-centred sustainable development; and contributing to the full development of human resources. An integrated approach is suggested for achieving these goals. In this regard, special emphasis has been put on partnership, empowerment, international solidarity and recognition of diversity.

136. The Geneva Conference, under this Commitment, deals primarily with health and education. Having been held after the dust settled following discussions on the role of the State in the development process, the Conference recognises the primary responsibility of governments for providing and ensuring access to basic social services for all; and developing sustainable pro-poor health and education systems by promoting community participation in planning and managing basic social services.

137. It states that there is inter-dependence between health on the one hand and employment, education, environment, transport, nutrition, and food security on the other.

138. Reference is made to the Dakar Framework of Action for Education for All adopted at the World Education Forum in April 2000. It is recalled that the fulfillment of the goals of the Dakar Framework of Action would call for the mobilisation of additional resources amounting to 8 billion dollars per annum. The document summarises the main goals of the Framework which include providing access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality to all children by 2015; improving early childhood care and education; achieving 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy; improving the quality of education; and removing gender disparity.

139. The Geneva Conference document, under this Commitment, deals with the problem of protecting intellectual property rights and at the same time providing access to essential drugs. The document is somewhat ambivalent on this issue. On the one hand it emphasises the "critical importance of access - - - at affordable prices" and for members States to "freely exercise - - - in an unrestricted manner, the options available to them under international agreements to protect and advance access to life-saving essential drugs". But on the other hand, it also recognises the contributions of intellectual property rights to promoting research, development and distribution of drugs; and qualifies member State's freedom to ensure access to essential drugs by the phrase "consistent with national laws and international agreements acceded to."

# VIII. Instrumentalities for Promoting Social Development

140. Institutions play a very important role in promoting social development. We have already dealt with the role of institutions at the national level i.e. governments, NGOs and civil society organisations. In addition, the Copenhagen Summit Conference adopted separate Commitments under the headings "Structural Adjustment Programmes", "Financial Resources for Social Development" and "Improved and Strengthened Framework for International, Regional and Sub-regional Cooperation for Social Development".

## *A. Structural Adjustment Programmes*

141. The Conference recommended that structural adjustment programmes should incorporate social development goals. They should promote basic social programmes, in particular those affecting the poor and the vulnerable, and protect them from budget reductions.

142. The Geneva Conference recommended that structural adjustment programmes addressed to economic crisis, including those negotiated between national governments and IMF, should strive to ensure that they do not lead to a sharp drop in economic activity or sharp cuts in social spending. It was further recommended that governments and international financial institutions should be encouraged to improve the on-going dialogue on the design, implementation and role of structural adjustment programmes so as to ensure the full integration of social and economic components, and the protection of social policies and programmes.

143. The Geneva Conference has also recommended that national policies should be so designed as to take into account the concerns of people living in poverty. This can be done by incorporating social development goals in the formulation of structural adjustment programmes, including poverty reduction, in consultation with civil society. In this process, particular emphasis should be put on:

a. More equitable and enhanced access to incomes and resources.

b. Protecting core social development expenditure identified by individual governments, from expenditure cuts.

c. Ensuring that public services reach people living in poverty, and vulnerable groups as a matter of priority.

d. Preserving and enhancing the social capital and in strengthening the social fabric of society and ensuring that gender issues are taken into account in the formulation of structural adjustment programmes.

## *B. Financial resources for Social Development*

144. Non-availability of adequate resources constitutes an important constraint to the realisation of the goals of social development. The various estimates made for the requirement of additional resources to achieve the multiplicity of goals in the field of social development add to an astronomical sum. The bulk of these resources are expected to come from the efforts of the developing countries themselves, through the moblisation of additional resources. Since the main focus of attention till recently has been on economic development, a reprioritisation of development goals in order to shift the emphasis to social development would involve a commensurate shift of resources from economic development to social development. Developing countries now widely recognise their own responsibility for finding resources for social development and the need to divert resources from economic development to social development. At the same time they went to the Summit with the expectation that it would be an occasion to get commitments from developed countries for making additional resources available for social development. The negotiations at the Summit focussed mainly on three issues:-

a. Eliciting from developed countries a firmer and unambiguous commitment for meeting the U.N. target of the transfer of 0.7 per cent of GNP as official development assistance.

b. Shifting of priority in resources allocation by both developed and developing countries with a view to reaching what was described as a 20:20 pact i.e., developed countries should devote 20 per cent of their ODA for financing social development projects and programmes in a particular developing country with a matching action by that country to devote 20 per cent of budget resources for social development purposes.

c. Reaching agreement on new and innovative ideas for raising funds at the international level which could be earmarked for social development.

145. The developing countries did not get satisfactory results on any of the above three points. The Summit therefore turned out to be a failure from the point of view of meeting the resources expectations of the developing countries. Resources emerged as the major concern at the Geneva Review Conference also. But there also there was no change in the long held status quo.

146. Both the Copenhagen and the Geneva Conferences reiterated the 0.7 per cent target on a best endeavour basis without setting any deadline. Commitment on this score, therefore, was much weaker than that made as far back as in 1970 in the International Development Strategy for the decade of the 1970s. Both the Conferences adopted identical formulation i.e. a commitment to "strive" for the fulfillment of the 0.7 per cent target "as soon as possible".

147. The 20:20 formula was suggested by some of the developed countries and international organisations. Developing countries were not very enthusiastic about this formula because it did not carry any promise for additionalities of resources. All that it called for was a shift in the priority for allocating resources. The Copenhagen Summit reached an agreement on "a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing countries partners to allocate, on an average, 20 per cent of ODA and 20 per cent of national budget respectively to basic social programmes." As it has turned out, there are very few agreements between individual developed and developing countries to operationalise the 20:20 Pact.

148. The formulation adopted on new and innovative ideas for raising funds was extremely weak and non-operational in character both in Copenhagen and in Geneva. In Copenhagen, it was recommended that relevant U.N. bodies, particularly the Economic and Social Council, "should be requested to consider new and innovative ideas for generating funds and for this purpose to offer any useful suggestions". In Geneva, the idea got even more diluted. The governments were advised to conduct a rigorous analysis of "advantages, disadvantages and other implications" of proposals for developing new and innovative sources of funding, for dedication to social development and poverty alleviation programmes. This recommendation carries the implication that such proposals can even be disadvantageous and

have adverse implications for the development of developing countries or for the global economy. Thus the idea of new and innovative measures for raising international resources has been shelved for a long time to come. Evidently, given the tenuous and negative character of the consensus on this point, no follow up action has so far been taken.

149. Both at the Copenhagen and Geneva Conferences, appropriate formulations were adopted on providing debt relief to developing countries. These formulations simply summarise the consensus reached in the World Bank, IMF and other forums.

150. Strangely enough, the Geneva Conference has made a recommendation on the stabilisation of commodity prices. This has come long after the view imposed by the protagonists of free market forces, particularly the Bretton Woods Institutions, that the earlier effort for stabilising commodity prices through inter-governmental agreements or arrangements were ill-conceived and should, therefore, be given up and that commodity prices should be left to be determined by the market forces. Reference to the stabilisation of commodity prices at the Geneva Conference reflects the plight of developing countries dependent on primary commodities for the bulk of their national income and export earning, brought about by the continuing decline in the prices of these commodities in the world market dominated by multinational corporations.

151. In keeping with the practice these days, both the Copenhagen and Geneva Conferences were long on recommending measures for the mobilisation of domestic resources and short on commitment for providing international resources. The Geneva Conference adopted a very elaborate formulation on the mobilisation of domestic resources by developing countries, particularly through good governance, more effective utilisation of resources and restructuring the mechanism for the delivery of basic services. Following are some of the specific recommendations:

a. Enhancing the cost effectiveness of social spending.

b. Attracting private investments so as to free public resources for social development.

c. Encouraging active participation of the civil society in the delivery of social services.

d. Extending access to micro-credits and other modes of financing of that nature, to people living in poverty.

e. Supporting community participation in the planning, provision and maintenance of local infrastructure, and

f. Preventing bribery, money laundering etc.

### C. *Improved and strengthened framework for international, regional and sub-Regional cooperation for social development*

152. The measures recommended under this Commitment are of a routine procedural nature. These include:

a. Adoption of appropriate measures and mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the outcome of the Summit.

b. The role assigned to U.N. Regional Commissions in evaluating at the regional level, the progress made in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

c. Similar role assigned to the Economic and Social Council at the global level. Strengthening for this purpose the structure, resources and processes of the Council and its subsidiary bodies.

d. The U.N. General Assembly to consider holding a Special Session in the year 2000 for an over-all review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

# Chapter 2

## Social Development - Theoretical Underpinnings

Traditionally, development has been perceived as any change resulting in increased economic productivity and prosperity. Classical social theorists viewed development in terms of economic growth and progress, with the social factor in development and the formation of complex structures and organisations perceived as a consequence of economic development and change. These assumptions of classical theory may be traced to the views of economic historians and social thinkers who believed that once economic development was achieved, social development would automatically follow. Economic growth itself has been a subject of enquiry, with many thinkers building up theories of what fosters it. Max Weber showed that the capitalistic institutional order was associated with a set of mental attitudes directed towards economic activities. These, according to him, constitute the 'spirit' or ethos of modern-day capitalism. A high need for achievement was viewed as a mediating link in the relationship between the Protestant ethic and economic growth, with increased initiative and efficacy seen as the operationalisation of a crucial psychological dimension of the Protestant ethic itself. Joseph Schumpeter, who advanced a general theory of fluctuations in economic growth, saw economic growth and profit as the outcome of entrepreneurial and technological innovation, while for Rostow, the "take-off" stage to self-sustaining economic growth was the key to the development process.[1]

Seen from a Marxist viewpoint, capitalist development had dark overtones. As against Max Weber's notion of `efficacy', implied in the rationalization of all of man's activities, was Marx's stress on overcoming alienation, which sprang from the repression of spontaneous emotions.[2] Andre Gunder Frank, a later theorist who extended Marx's capitalist critique, argued that `development' was essentially 'the development of underdevelopment'; it was characterised by a whole chain of 'metropolis-satellite' relations and a complete reordering of the system, involving structural transformation of the economy, society, polity and culture.[3] Problems of poverty, unemployment, literacy,

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1 Aidan Foster-Carter, *The Sociology of Development*, Causeway Books, Brighton, 1993. P. 13.

2 Thomas. B. Bottomore (trans. and ed.), *Karl Marx: Early Writings* New York: Mc Graw Hill, 1963. p. 171.

3 Frank, A. G., *Latin America: Underdevelopment Revolution*, New York Monthly Review press, 1970 Ch. 2.

health, and so on were to be understood not "only as a specialist field concerned with measuring improvements or declines in 'social' indicators but also in understanding the process of change and development as a whole".[4] Such a conception of development does not rest on the implicit assumption that benefits achieved by the nation in generalised economic terms will somehow percolate down. Conceptually, as Sears argues, there is a need to draw a sharp line between growth and development, with 'development' treated as a normative concept synonymous with 'improvement'.

# Recent Developments – a Brief Review

Recent trends in social development theory include explicit and self-conscious post-Marxist critiques or neo-Weberian revivals.[5] Other approaches include an 'actor-oriented' one, seeking to uncover through interactionist investigations the very processes that produce and reproduce particular structural forms.[6] A distinct but allied tendency is the 'new political economy' of the 'collective choice' school of Robert Bates, the thrust of which is that "economic reasoning' can be employed to explain the way political process and political institutions affect the individual's desires for valued but scarce resources and aggregate into outcomes for entire societies.[7] The overall tendency is to explain institutional outcome with reference to the choices of individual or collective actors. The convergence on this point between the anthropological interactionalism of the 'Manchester' school (Kapferer, Long) with Bates', notably non-neo-classical application of rational-choice analysis in the field of development studies, underscores a significant trend.

Reacting to the "accretive, assimilative and adaptive" nature of the process of modernisation[8] and to the predominantly western concepts based on the idea of universal knowledge or culture, post-modernism emphasised 'plurality' of different types and at several levels. Such emphases `celebrate a plurality of voices and representations, in the process inviting those who are most persistently scripted by another to speak for themselves'.[9] In place of "monolithic" process of modernisation or even socialist

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4 David Booth, (Ed.) *Rethinking Social Development*: Theory, Research and Practice, Longman, Scientific and Technical, England, 1994, p. XII

5 Ibid. p.12.

6 N Long, (ed.) *Encounters at the Interface: A Perspective on Social Discontinuing in Rural Development,* Wageningen University Press, 1989.

7 R. Bates, *Political Economy of Development: A Rational Choice Perspective,* University of California Press, 1988, p.3,

8 Yogendra Singh, *Indian Sociology: Social Conditioning and Emerging Concerns,* New Delhi, Vistaar, 1986, p.77.

9 David Booth, *op. cit.*, p.96.

transformations, it is the multiple groups at different levels, engaged in a number of situations, of 'conflict' and 'adjustments', which are included in the policy framework. "Peoples who have been defined as marginals… are… encouraged to put forward accounts of their own conditions and aspirations."[10] The social groups that become relevant are the poor, the women, the landless, the tribals, the *dalits*, the migrants, the ethnic minorities and so on. Their experiences and aspirations become important not as "the other" with reference to the "mainstream" but on their own, articulated by themselves. The 'sites' of the processes of development are the household, the community, the region, the 'local needs' - these are important considerations in development. "The effect is to fragment, but to do so in order to enable, to empower…"[11] The ideas that emerged out of such "exhaustion of modernity"[12] have become important for the programmes of development with emphasis on 'targeted' programmes, the place accorded to the 'marginal', to 'local' initiatives, and articulations by different groups themselves as also their 'representation' at different levels of decision-making.

The process of 'desegregation' has made the analysis richer because many conclusions about causal relations between aspects of development were based on macro framework, i.e. international or inter-country comparisons and/or the experiences of the developed world. Many of these conclusions about causal relations had taken the form of 'stereotypes' in development literature, often applied almost blindly to the development strategies in the developing countries. Notably, disaggregated analysis have brought forward more region-caste-class-gender specific relationships among variables, e.g. Agnihotri's study on sex ratio patterns in the Indian population,[13] determinants of leadership and empowerment in Bankura, West Bengal,[14] the Kerala pattern of social development[15] and the determinant of local participation.[16] These studies tend to register revisions in the usually held 'notions' of the development processes.

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10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., p.97.

12 David Lyon, *Post Modernity*, Buckingham, Open University Press, 1994, p.6.

13 S. B. Agnihotri, *Sex Ratio Patterns in the Indian Population: A Fresh Exploration*, New Delhi, Sage Publication, 2000.

14 Vina Mazumdar, *A Partnership in Collective Learning and Actions*. New Delhi: CWDS.

15 Joseph Tharamangalam, "The Perils of Social Development without Economic Growth: The Development Debacle of Kerala, India", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol.30, No.1, January-March 1998.

16 Robert Wade. *Village Republics: Economic Condition for Collective Action in South Asia*. Cambridge University Press, 1988.

# Values, Goals, Standards

Values, goals and standards in the concept of development enable a comparison between a country's present position against the preferred one. In his analysis of South Asian development, Gunnar Myrdal, brings out certain ideals of modernisation drawn form the actual values held by people who were concerned with the Asian problem and were important in the determination of the public policy. In a like vein, development values relating to human needs and distribution form the crux of Jan Drewnoski's system of welfare indicators.[17] Similarly, a UN report of 1954 defines 'standard of living' to include 'aspirations'. These normative indicators served as a basis for evaluation and 'targets' of policy. As non-economic variables became important, a comprehensive 'social indicators' were proposed. A note of caution may be sounded here, for the distinction between indicator and the operational definition is often unclear. To cite a case in point, death rates can be used to indicate public health levels. Moreover, it is important to note that economic and social variables do not automatically indicate the operational definition.[18]

Social development, originally conceived as a part of economic development, includes several dimensions, both normative and empirical.[19] Conceptually, indicators of development can be both objective and subjective. While subjective social indicators refer to the measures of people's perception or assessment of well being, objective social indicators refer to measures of social conditions, including the monetary measures like GNP and its various components,[20] the levels of living indicated by measures of demography, food, housing, education, etc. Objective indicators, it may be noted, can be both economic and social. Research on objective social indicators includes the UN report of 1954, Jan Drewnoski's work on the measurement of levels of living and welfare, the OECD research program on the measurement of social well-being, and Lisk's categories of basic needs[21]. Thus, in sum, three approaches to social indicators can be identified - monetary measurement (of GNP and its various components,) measurement of social conditions (objective social indicators), and measures based on people's perception or assessment of well being (subjective social indicators).

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17 Jan Drewnoski, "Social Indicators and Welfare Measurement: Remarks on Methodology" in Nancy Baster, *op.cit*.

18 McGranaham, "Development Indicators and Development Models", in Nancy Baster, op.cit.

19 Nancy Baster, (Ed): *Measuring Development: The Role and Adequacy of Development Indicators*, London, Frank Cass, 1972.

20 The monetary measures are derived from national accounting concepts of per capita and per household income, output and consumption. However, reservations have been expressed about the adequacy of per capita GNP as a measure of economic welfare, and it has been suggested that the concept be modified to include various aspects of welfare.

21 Ibid. p.91

We now turn to the concept of *quality of life,* which provides an all–inclusive notion of life and living. The development of indices to measure the standard, level and style of living shows a trend towards the measurement of quality.[22] The introduction of people's perception modifies the index to make it sensitive to what the people would prefer social development to be. This is of particular significance in a democratic country as such a concept relates development to aspiration. Nitish R. De remarks that the "QL will increasingly daunt accentuated militarisation in favour of education, health care, housing, productive employment and ecological balance".[23]

The *Physical Quality of Life Index* (PQLI) combines several parameters like the infant mortality, life expectancy and literacy into a composite measure. Table 1.1 shows the PQLI for selected Indian states. 'These criteria represent a range of social conditions – availability of nutrition, clean drinking water, well-being of expectant mothers, healthy general environment, skill to participate effectively in society and to share the benefits of economic growth.' While the PQLI does not measure many social and psychological characteristics suggested by QL like justice, political freedom, participation, it includes the needs and desires of individuals seeking longer longevity, reduced illness and improvement of opportunities. The PQLI index marks an improvement on measures of development emphasising 'development of the people' in place of 'development of the economy.' The distinction is illustrated in table 1.1, which shows that despite Punjab having a higher per capita income, Kerala scores higher on the PQLI index, as reflected in infant mortality and literacy, primary health care and primary education.

# Human Development

In the 1990s, `human development' emerged on the scene to enjoy wide international currency. It was defined in the *Human Development Report 1990* as `a process of enlarging peoples' choices. The most critical of these wide ranging choices, which forms the basis of the composite index called the Human Development Index or HDI, are to live a long and healthy life, to be educated and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect'. A related concept was that of `human security', defined by the *Human Development Report 1994* as `safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression; and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in patterns of daily live – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities'. Enlarging choices and improving capabilities of both humans and institutions of governance and of civil

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22 Ram Krishna Mukherjee, *The Quality of Life Valuation in Social Research,* New Delhi, Sage Publication, 1989.

23 Nitish De, "Towards an Application of Quality of Life and Quality of Work," *Economic and Political weekly,* Vol. 19, Nos. 20 and 21, 19-28 May 1984.

## Table 1.1.
## PQLI for Selected Indian States

| States | PQLI | Indices Of Life Expectancy | Infant Mortality Rate | Literacy Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assam / Meghalaya | 37 | 34.1 | 41.1 | 36.0 |
| Orissa | 37 | 37.4 | 42.8 | 31.1 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 25 | 27.9 | 21.2 | 24.6 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 43 | 47.9 | 54.1 | 28.2 |
| Karnataka | 48 | 46.9 | 61.3 | 35.8 |
| Kerala | 70 | 63.6 | 77.0 | 69.3 |
| Tamil Nadu | 46 | 43.1 | 51.8 | 42.8 |
| Rajasthan | 33 | 32.1 | 45.9 | 21.9 |
| Maharashtra | 49 | 46.4 | 55.0 | 44.8 |
| Punjab | 50 | 67.4 | 52.7 | 28.8 |

Source: M. D. Morris, et. al, *Measuring the Condition of India's Poor*, New Delhi, Promilla and Co. 1982.

society were the guiding principles of human development. Inspired by the `entitlement'[24] and `capabilities'[25] approach, the scope of subsequent Human Development Reports became more comprehensive, both conceptually and methodologically. The 1995 Report added the gender dimension via its gender-related Human Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM).[26] While there have been comments and criticisms of the HDI, often on methodological grounds,[27] the impact of these Reports have been immense. There is a consciousness and emphasis on new concepts and categories in policy making. These reports have initiated exercises

24 N. Aslanbeigui and G. Summerfield. 1993. `Impact of the Responsibility System on Rural Women in China : An Application of Sen's Theory of Entitlements', *World Develolpment*, Vol. 17, # 3.

25 A.K. Sen. 1981. *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlements and Deprivations*. Oxford Clarendon Press

26 For a review of the HDR concepts and methodology, see Sanjay Baru, 1997. *Human Development Reports : A Synthesis* (monograph). United Nations Development Programme. New York.

27 N.Krishnaji. 1997. `Human Poverty Index : A Critique', *Economic & Political Weekly*. XXXII (35)

to gauge the human development performance of the States in India[28] and of districts in the States. [29] Human development and its dimensions have given a new meaning and thrust to social development.

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28 Abusalih Sharif. 1999. *Indian Human Development Report : A Profile of Indian States in the 1990s*. Oxford University Press.

29 S.S. Acharya and N.K. Singhi. 1999. *Status of Human Development in Rajasthan : District Level Development Status Index,* IDSJ Monograph Series 21, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur, November 1999.



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# Chapter 3

## Concepts & Contexts

Social development concepts of different sorts have been fostered and shaped by a variety of contexts. Perhaps the most well known of these is h*uman development,* of relatively recent origin and *a* widely known entrant in a long list. A concept that has both inspired the UNDP's *Human Development Reports* and is their cornerstone, h*uman development is* understood to refer to the development or expansion of `choice' or opportunity in spheres such as standard of living, education, health and political freedom. It is an idea whose time has come, one which gained currency as the realisation grew that deprivation and lack of opportunity could be extensive even when economic indicators are robust. The rationale for planned efforts to promote human development does not however derive merely from its desirability as an end in itself; it stems also from the fact that the expansion of opportunity could foster a people-centred growth trajectory. Prioritisation in the sphere of government policy was thought necessary if the gospel of human development was to fulfil its promise, and herein lay the genesis of a measurement agenda, for quantification could highlight deficiency and fuel advocacy. Besides, aid flows could be made conditional to a country's standing in terms of human development and its will or capacity to advance on that front.

## Index & Profile

Right from the start, it was acknowledged that quantification of so diverse a phenomenon as human development was fraught with practical difficulties. Hence, measurement was confined to three key components only - health, as approximated by life expectancy; knowledge, in terms of literacy and schooling; and standard of living, as shown by income. A given country's ranking on each of the three scales was quantified and the results aggregated to derive a composite, snapshot measure - the *Human Development Index*, or HDI. With fine-tuning becoming part and parcel of its measurement mind set, the HDI was recast in many a mould to make it a better measure. To cite cases in point, knowledge, initially assessed in terms of literacy alone, soon acquired an added element - years of schooling; standard of living, as captured by income, was subject to an `adjustment' or weightage such that countries with greater income disparities were pushed down in the scale of HDI ranking; and fine tuning was carried out to arrive at `gender adjusted HDI's'. Similarly, income beyond a threshold level' was discounted, on the ground that `achieving a respectable level of human development does not require unlimited income'. This was given a further twist in the 1999 HDR, whose HDIs were based on a new formula that did not discount income as severely as before. One other sphere of `adjustment' is that of environment, which, the 1994 HDR says, was on the anvil. Indices other than the

HDI have been formulated as well, such as the *Gender Empowerment Measure*. The *Human Freedom Index* is another. High levels of freedom tend to be associated with a high level of human development, according to one Human Development Report. Another example is the *Human Poverty Index*, introduced in the 1997 HDR, which argued that poverty was no longer inevitable as the world has what it took to put an end to it. Yet another composite measure, the *Reproductive Health Index* of the UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities), is based on six parameters of maternal health.

Apart from the fact that HDI type indices gloss over the strands that go to make them up, there are many facets they do not capture. Thus, the HDI is itself confined to a circumscribed ambit of income, education and longevity. Disaggregated profiles focussed on specific features of human development can hence complement the HDI or like indices. More particularly, profiles can facilitate an identification of key factors that need to be redressed in a given context or setting. These could relate to aspects like quality of teaching or syllabi, domestic duties inimical to the girl child's school attendance, and bottlenecks in medical supplies to remote areas. Both quantitative as well as qualitative data have a role to play in these types of assessments to probe the roots of human development bottlenecks. As opposed to a profile, a composite index can only facilitate a first-stage identification of deprivation pockets, across or within nations, either to make out a case for advocacy or as a preparatory phase in a planning exercise to determine resource allocation priorities. It is true that, as in the case of the HDI, a profile too can impart clout to advocacy and facilitate planning for resource allocation. But the distinguishing rationale for a `profile', and its cutting edge, is that of ascertaining the precise points at which interventions might optimally be targeted.

# Overarching Contexts

A growing awareness of global economic interdependencies and the perception that human development had cross-country ramifications were at the root of a Summit in Copenhagen to deliberate on issues of human development. While international pressures undoubtedly have given a thrust to human development, there have been numerous roots also in other periods, in different parts of the world. In America, John Dewey's views on the individual in relation to society was critical in shaping twentieth century schooling and democracy in that country, and also was a source of inspiration for participatory initiatives in the social development sphere.[1] In the Philippines, Nepal and Bangladesh, the move towards greater opportunities for political participation occurred as a `second wave' of the transition from autocracy to democracy, while in autocratic China, rural development provided the rationale for decentralisation and village democracy.[2]

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1 Richard Morse. `Participatory Self Review: Recovering Our Roots in John Dewey'. Social Change. Vol 28, nos. 2 & 3. June- September 1998. pp. 122-141.

2 Abdul Aziz and David D. Arnold, eds. Decentralised Governance in Asian Countries. Sage Publications, 1996, pp. 18-19.

# The Past is Not History

Even within a country, the legacy of the past can vary from region to region. In Orissa, while mobilisation for environmental protest had been on the rise post Independence, there has been a marked difference in the coastal regions as compared to the inland areas, where protest occurred less often and was not sufficiently sustained. Communal ties, which prevented different groups from coming together for a common cause, has been identified as the explanatory factor.[3] This is one instance of how the legacy of the past determines the parameters of *social capital*, i.e., the `trust, networks and norms shared by a group of actors that enable them to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives'.[4] *Social Capital* has been at the root of the high quality of democracy in Italy, according to Putnam, whose pioneering study[5] provoked an energetic debate on the concept and led to a collaborative project on Democracy and Social Capital in Segmented Societies, the aim of which was to investigate whether social capital has had an impact on democracy and environmental protest movements in India and South Africa.[6] As part of that project, a study of the functioning of panchayats in Uttar Pradesh showed that social capital tends to build up *within* caste-based segments, rather than across them. Not only that, group identities that create social capital within segments can be inimical to more broad-based patterns of social cooperation.[7] Yet, there are grounds for hope; in the two study districts of Uttar Pradesh, there are indications that processes of conflict resolution through negotiation and bargaining, may, in time, lead to a more broad based social capital uniting caste / class groups.[8] Still, the past clearly cannot be wished away. While it can shackle, however, it can also liberate. Thus, when concepts laden with social development overtones enjoy wide currency in society, these bequeaths of history enable rather than stymie, as developments in, Kerala, Sri Lanka, Costa Rica and China attest.

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3 Ashok Swain, `Social Capital and Popular Mobilisation : Studying Environmental Protests in an Indian State', *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 8 : 1 pp. 33-46, cited in Hans Blomkvist and Ashok Swain, `Investigating Democracy and Social Capital in India. Economic & Political Weekly, February 24, 2001, p. 641.

4 Hans Blomkvist and Ashok Swain, op cit. P. 639

5 Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work : Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press, 1993.

6 Hans Blomkvist and Ashok Swain, op cit. P. 639.

7 Sudha Pai, Social Capital, Panchayats and Grassroots Democracy : Politics of Dalit Assertion in Uttar Pradesh, Economic & Political Weekly, February 24, 2001, p. 652.

8 Ibid. pp. 652-654.

## *Social & Political Will*

Kerala, Sri Lanka and Costa Rica are among the regions of the world where phenomenally high levels of health were achieved at low cost. Breakthroughs occurred in the context of spread of medical technology, large public spending on health and education, the density and efficiency of services, policies to ensure a nutritional floor, immunisation campaigns, etc. Of the social elements critical to the success of the health initiatives in region, the salient ones were an open political system, radicalism, a dedication to education, and egalitarianism, including a high degree of female autonomy.[9]

In Kerala, the matrilineal institutions among the Nayars and Ezhavas allowed women a considerable degree of autonomy. Moreover, the social reform movements of the Ezhavas and Nayars, together with the struggles over the right to temple entry, had helped politicise the society and set the stage for the communist electoral victory. Education, sought to be promoted as an important facet of social reform, was seen as a route to upward mobility by the lower castes and self-preservation for the upper castes in rapidly changing times.[10] At the same time, Christian missionaries established schools in Kerala throughout the nineteenth century, including the first girls' school in 1819. Reacting to the demand for schooling and the missionary inroads, the princely governments of Travancore and Cochin put State sponsored schooling on their agendas.[11]

In Sri Lanka, a resurgence of Sinhalese cultural nationalism with its stress on Western values had as its helmsman Anagarika Dharmapala, who argued that sanitation, education and work made Europe great. Curiously, in that country, the colonial government's Donoughmore Commission had advocated franchise for women, on the ground that their concern about the health of their children would place it high on the political agenda. Over the next half-century, not only education but also health featured prominently in the manifestos of Sri Lanka's political parties.[12]

Unlike Sri Lanka, Kerala and Costa Rica, where political parties competed with each other to provide educational and health services to the electorate,[13] in China, Cuba and Vietnam, the route to low mortality followed a different path. To take the case of China (which, like Kerala, Sri Lanka and Costa Rica achieved good health at a low level of income), health, education and the status of women were ideological aims. Activism in tune with State policies and the spontaneity permitted by decentralisation were also important. Yet, even in China, the respect for

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9 John C. Caldwell, Routes to Low Mortality in Poor Countries. *Population & Development Review*. 12 (2): 182.

10 T.M. Thomas Isaac and Michael Tharakan, `Kerala: Towards a New Agenda', *Economic & Political Weekly*, August 5-12, Vol XXX, Nos. 31 & 32, p. 1994.

11 Ibid. pp. 189-90, 192.

12 Ibid. pg 188-1899.

13 John C. Caldwell. Op. Cit. Pg 193.

health (traditional medicine) and education had long antecedents[14]. Overall, while social and political will were key factors at work in Kerala, Sri Lanka and Costa Rica, in China, it was political will that was critical.[15]

### *Roots of Radicalism*

While Kerala and West Bengal are two of the Indian States with the longest period of left front rule, Kerala's poor are far more politically conscious, to the point of radical militancy. This can be traced back to the extremely rigid social exclusion in Kerala, which the depressed castes fought against - notably the Ezhavas, who came together under their charismatic leader, Sri Narayana Guru. At a later stage, leaders of the upper castes too became aware of the need for social reform, and established their own organisations. When the communists arrived on the scene, they found a fertile ground to sow their seeds. In West Bengal, by contrast, the caste system was much less onerous, due to the influence of religious reformers like Chaitanya Deva and others, and this may be one reason why radicalism of the Kerala variety did not take root there.[16]

## We Shall Overcome

If Kerala, Sri Lanka and Costa Rica achieved a phenomenal good health at relatively low levels of income, it is because their inherited social assets gave them a head start. The point is illustrated also by a comparison of the politically conscious States of West Bengal and Kerala; historical developments in Kerala made the poor far more politically conscious, and this element of the social fabric was critical to the State's superior health profile.[17] Still, even when an inherited social edge is lacking or deficient, political will can compensate, as the case of China bears testimony. The Chinese experience also fosters the hope that political will can bail out countries that have followed an alternative development pattern. Where political will is weak, though, there is a need to bolster it. Even if social will is not inherited, it can be built afresh. Struggles for transparency and accountability in governance acquire salience in this context as does the need for a greater degree of people's participation, the building of `social capital', and a role for watchdog institutions, fact-finding agencies and think tanks.

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14 Ibdi. pp. 91, 207-208.

15 Scott B. Halstead, Julia A. Walsh and Kenneth S. Warren. *Good Health at Low Cost : Proceedings of a Conference at the Bellagio Conference Centre, Bellagio, Italy, April 29-May 3, 1985*. Rockefeller Foundation, 1985.

16 Moni Nag, `The Impact of Social & Economic Development on Mortality: Comparative Study of Kerala & West Bengal. In Scott B. Halstead, Julia A Walsh and Kenneth S. Warren Eds. *Good Health at Low Cost*. Rockefeller Foundation, 1985, pp 71-73.

17 Ibid. p. 73.

# Chapter 4

# The Context of State Initiatives

In this study, we survey Social Development in India with a macro perspective, in relation to programmes initiated under the Five Year Plans, which themselves have emerged from a comprehensive perception of social development elaborated in Part IV of the Constitution, where the Directive Principles of State Policy are enunciated. Together with these programmes, we have examined some emerging problems and issues that impact directly on social development. While analysing the Plans, we are concerned with the broad conception of Social Development, the scope of the programmes and the changing emphasis in the successive Plans. We do not claim to have attempted any comprehensive evaluation of the plans and the programmes. We have also not fully elaborated the vast complexity of different sectors of the programmes of social welfare. The chapters in the volume are organised in terms of the programme rubrics as well as some broad areas of concern - population, health, education, poverty, gender issues, marginalisation and empowerment, conflicts and violence, the institutional crisis, and governance.

## The Constitution's Counsel

The Constitution of India displays clear indications of the nascent State's commitment to social development. Significantly, as many as nine out of the 16 Articles of Part IV of the constitution refer directly to the aspects of social development. The Preamble itself articulates the intention to secure to all citizens justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. These are ideals that have provided the over-all direction to the provisions of the constitution and to its programmes and policies. As subsequent elaboration and interpretations by the judiciary clearly illustrate, they are indicators of the role the State was expected to play in the sphere of social development. Social justice was interpreted to include protection of the weaker sections of the society[1] and the tribals[2]; and distributive justice, the removal of inequalities[3]. Legal justice was also important,[4] while the term

1 Sadhuram vs. Pulin, 1984. Reference, to the judicial interpretation are from D. D. Basu, *Shorter Constitution of India* 12th Edition, New Delhi, Wadhwa and company, 1999.

2 Ibid.

3 Lingappa vs. State of Maharashtra, 1985, Indra vs. Union of India, 1992.

4 Babu vs. Raghunathji, 1976.

‘fraternity’ was interpreted to include the dignity of the individual, especially with reference to the backward classes[5] and the religious minorities.[6]

The Directive Principle of State Policy, which along with the Fundamental Rights, were to "form the core of the Constitution",[7] represent, according to judicial interpretation, the spirit of the Welfare State[8] and the ideal of socio-economic justice.[9] We list below aspects of social development that find mention in the Directive Principles. We cite them either within quotation marks, to indicate what the State shall endeavour to do, or we merely indicate the area covered.

- ☑ `to promote the welfare of the peoples by securing and protecting… justice, social, economic and political".
- ☑ `to minimise inequalities of income and … to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities … also amongst groups of people…’
- ☑ an adequate means of livelihood.
- ☑ prevent concentration of income and means of production.
- ☑ equal pay for men and women for equal work.
- ☑ `to ensure that opportunities of securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic and other disabilities’
- ☑ `right to work, to education and to public assistance in eases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want’.
- ☑ `just and humane conditions of work, and maternity relief.’
- ☑ `to secure … to all workers … a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and cultural opportunities…"
- ☑ "… provide, within the period of ten years… free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years";
- ☑ ` promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of people, and, in particular, of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and protection for them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation’.
- ☑ raise the level of nutrition and standard of living and improve public health.
- ☑ `… protect and improve the environment.

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5 Indra vs. Union of India, 1993, Supreme Court.

6 Raghunath Rao vs. Union of India, 1994.

7 Markandeya vs. State of Andhra Pradesh, 1989.

8 Keshavanand vs. State of Kerala, 1973.

9 Union of India vs. H. D. C., 1994.

Many of the Directives have been reinforced by judicial pronouncements. Some of these are listed below

- ☑ "welfare of the people and social justice" to include directive to the Municipality to `remove nuisance'.[10]
- ☑ with regard to equal pay for equal work, `any discrimination… on to grounds of sex' to be struck down.[11] Being a `constitutional' goal, it must be kept in view in the interpretation of Articles 14 and 16, so as to be elevated to the rank of the fundamental right.[12]
- ☑ with regard to the welfare of children, `where labour and social welfare laws are enacted by the State…, the Courts should strictly enforce such laws against the Governments themselves'[13] prohibiting employment of children in hazardous jobs.[14]
- ☑ guidelines to legal aid.
- ☑ right to education; prison reforms to ensure `just and humane conditions'.[15]

Finally, we examine references to social development in the three lists in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, which enumerate the 'fields' of legislation that the Union and States are empowered to legislate upon under Article 246. These include specific items of social development in the State and Concurrent lists. Water, public health and sanitation, and relief for the disabled are in the State list. The Concurrent List includes population control, social security and education. The Eleventh and the Twelfth Schedules added by the 73rd and the 74th Amendments of 1992 provide for the devolution of powers to the *panchayats* and municipalities and include rural housing, drinking water, the poverty alleviation programme, primary and secondary education, health and sanitation, family welfare and child development, social welfare, especially of the handicapped and mentally retarded, and the welfare of the weaker sections, particularly, the S.C.S. and S.Ts. Similarly the *Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act* of 1996 assigns certain powers to the *gram sabha*, e.g., to prevent alienation of land, and exercise control over institutions and functionaries in social sectors.

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10 Ratlam Municipality vs. Vardhichnad, 1980.

11 Mackison Co. vs. Audrey, 1987.

12 Randhir vs. Union of India, 1982; Ramachandra vs. union of India, 1984; Grih Kalyan vs. Union of India, 1991.

13 Bandhna Morch vs. Union of India, 1984.

14 Mehta vs. State of Tamil Nadu, 1991.

15 Patnaik vs. State of A. P. , 1979.

# Planning for Social Development

Planning, according to the Government Resolution of March 1950, was intended “to promote a rapid rise in the standard of living of the people by efficient exploitation of the resources of the country, increasing production, and offering opportunities to all for employment in the service of the community.” In his speech in the Lok Sabha on December 15, 1952, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru said: 'A revolution is something which will change fundamentally the structure of our society either in the political or economic field. It is with this background in our minds that we must consider this first attempt of ours to make a Plan'. Planning was to have a distinct social development colouring; "... The accent of the socialist pattern of society is on the attainment of positive goals, the raising of living standards, the enlargement of opportunities for all, the promotion of enterprise among the disadvantaged classes and the creation of a sense of partnership among all sections of the community’. In the five-year Plans, as V.T. Krishnamachari put it, "the long term aspirations of 360 million people" as well as the requirement of fulfilling immediate needs, were to be kept in view: “The Plans should not be thought of merely as a series of projects or programmes for different sectors of the economy with specific financial allocations and targets... (They) ... seek to embody the efforts of the nation to build up a new life for itself and to create a new pattern of society in which there would be a fuller and richer life for all”.

The Planning process started amidst pressing problems of survival; the need for food security and an industrial infrastructure determined its shape. Coupled with problems of infrastructure were those of rehabilitation. Especially in the early years, social development was not pursued consciously; there was no mention of the programmes for *social development*, as is the case with economic development. The notions of social development that existed in the minds of the early Planners came under the rubric of 'Social Services', which included education, health and family planning, housing, labour policy, social welfare, welfare of backward classes, other social services like the rehabilitation of displaced persons, and the prohibition of alcohol. Over the years, the sector of social services has grown, not just in terms of the number of items, but also, in terms of a change of emphasis, which was evident in the Seventh and Eighth plans. Social services over the years have come to include nutrition; the problems of the elderly; development of women, youth and children; art and culture, and sports.

## *Development of Social Services*

In addition to the development programmes under the Social Services category (education, health, housing, development of backward classes, social welfare, family Planning etc.), other related sectors of development such as agriculture, health, welfare of backward classes, rehabilitation of displaced persons, programmes of rural development, including the Community Development programmes, and Panchayati Raj, also included elements of social welfare. Still, the expansion of the social sector suggests a growing emphasis on social

development in the planning process. While the importance given to Social Services in terms of allotment per Plan, and across Plans shows a gradual decline since the first play, the Fifth and Sixth plans mark a turning point (table 3.1). In the early Plans, i.e. from the First to the Third, the emphasis in sectors like education, health, family planning, housing, sanitation and social welfare was clearly on quantitative growth. The requirement at the beginning was to establish more schools and other institutions, increase the number of hospitals and the number of houses. Between the fourth and Sixth Plans, the emphasis shifted to improvement of quality along with quantity. Improvement in the schemes for teachers, the emergence of the concept of nutrition as an indicator of social development, considerations for youth, sports and cultural activities, and education for family planning, were some of few examples which reflected the change of approach.

## Table 3.1. Allotment to Social Services in the Five Year Plans

| Plan # | Plan Period | % Allotment to Social Services Out Of Total Plan Outlay |
|---|---|---|
| I | 1951-55 | 23.0 |
| II | 1956-61 | 19.6 |
| III | 1968-73 | 17.0 |
| IV | 1969-74 | 8.1 |
| V | 1974-79 | 16.5 |
| VI | 1980-85 | 14.4 |
| VII | 1985-90 | 10.0 |
| VIII | 1992-97 | 18.2 |

The Seventh Plan introduced a new focus by identifying *human resource development* as a thrust area. While it was included within the sector of social welfare, vulnerable sections of the society were treated separately. Child welfare, nutrition, programmes for the handicapped and the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and socio-economic programmes for women were given attention. In fact, from the Sixth Plan onwards, the tendency of the Plans to treat the family as the unit of welfare had changed. Women and children were treated separately and the individualised effort for each of these social sectors enabled better coverage. Different components of the society were treated in terms of their specific development requirements of education, health, housing, and employment. For example, the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) sought to establish a foundation for an integrated package of early childhood services that included supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health check-ups, referral services, nutrition and health education, and non-formal education to children below six years of age. Similarly, special socio-economic recommendations for women

covered health, education, malnutrition, vocational training, and encouragement to women's participation in the field of science and technology. Programmes in the later plans also included total planning for SC & STs, the handicapped and the elderly as sections requiring intensive attention.

Even as different sectors emerged, orientation of the already existing sectors of education, health and family welfare, housing, sanitation and water supply, were directed towards qualitative improvement. Thus, the Seventh Plan states that it `provides for reorientation of the education system so as to prepare the country to meet the challenges of the next century'. Apart from eradication of illiteracy in the age-group of 15-35 years and universal elementary education, the Seventh Plan's targets included "upgradation of standards and modernisation at all stages of education with effective links with work and with special emphasis on science and environment and on value orientation, provision of facilities for education of high quality and excellence in every district of the country and removal of obsolescence and modernisation of technical education". Similarly, in case of health, the Seventh Plan looked towards "effective co-ordination and coupling of health and health related services and activities, e.g. nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation, housing, Education, Information and Communication, and social welfare'. These were to be part of the package for achieving the goal of health for all by 2000 A.D. Qualitative improvements were required also in Health and Family Planning Services and in other sectors in the social services.

While from the First Plan to the Eighth Plan (1997) there has been basic continuities in approach, overall, a change in direction of wider social concerns in the strategies of growth in the development Plans is perceptible. At the same time, the Plans have had their own particular Foci. The First Plan, shaped in the background of problems that preceded Independence, stressed food security, with agriculture representing the main sector. The Second Plan focussed on industrialisation, which was expected to generate income and employment. It was believed that once economic development was achieved, development in other spheres would automatically follow. Social development was believed to reside within the process of economic development. A similar thrust on industry, transport and communication continued in the Third Plan as well. The Fourth Plan had to contend with crises of different kinds – economic, political and military.[16] In the backdrop were the war of 1971, different political parties contesting the Congress monopoly, a steep fall in agricultural production over two successive years (1965-66 and 1966-67), and the devaluation of the rupee in 1966. The main thrust was on agriculture and dependence on foreign aid was sought to be removed. The objective of the Fifth Plan was the removal of poverty. Poverty alleviation continued as the main objective of the Sixth Plan, in combination with accelerated rural development.

It was from the Seventh Plan that along with poverty alleviation, human resource development became a thrust area. The welfare of women and children, the aged,

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16 Francine R. Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947-1977: The Gradual Revolution*, Oxfors University Press, 1978. Chapter 8, "Crisis of National Economic Planning."

and the handicapped received considerable attention. The Eighth Plan continued with this focus with more comprehensively developed social objectives. These included " (i) creation of social security net through employment generation, improved health care and provision of extensive education facilities throughout the country, (ii) creation of appropriate organization and delivery systems to ensure that the benefits of investment in the social sectors reach the intended beneficiaries, (iii) containment of population growth through active people's co-operation and an effective scheme of incentives and disincentives, (iv) universalisation of elementary education and complete eradication of illiteracy among the people in the age-group of 15 to 35 years; (v) provision of safe-drinking water and primary health-care facilities, including immunisation, accessible to all villages and the entire population and complete elimination of scavenging'. It was clearly stated that 'the provisions relating to the development of human capital will remain the primary responsibility of the government'.

The Eighth and the Ninth Plans have been conceived and implemented in the era of liberalisation and the Structural Adjustment Programme. The consequent 'retreat of the State' has had some adverse effects on the social sector and the current discourse therefore is to organise the 'adjustment' in a manner that urgent problems of social development are attended to by the State.

## *Federalism & Plan Implementation*

While the 'central bias' in the Indian federal system is too well known to merit repitition, a high degree of "vertical imbalance" in favour of the Centre with reference to distribution of federal finances is to be noted as well[17] Transfer of resources to the States are through three channels - the statutory transfers through the Finance Commission, plan transfers through the Planning Commission[18], and discretionary grants, including financial assistance, provided directly by the central ministries. (In 1998-99, the three transfers were roughly in the proportion of 40:40:20).[19] While the Plan transfers are on the basis of the clearly laid out Gadgil Formula, there are no such formula for other transfers. This is especially true of the centrally sponsored schemes, which are funded either fully or on a matching basis and implemented by the States. In 2000, there were 185 such schemes run by the central ministries (budgetary expenditure - Rs. 19,000 crore in 1999-2000).[20] Rural development, family welfare and planning, primary education

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17 Govinda M. Rao and Tapas Sen, *Fiscal Federalism in India: Theory and Practice*, New Delhi, Macmillans, 1996. P.90.

18 Transfers through the Planning Commission are made under Article 282 of the Constitution, which allows grants for `public purpose' and artilce 293, which provides for grant of loans to the States by the Central government.

19 G. Thimmaials, "Federal India: Emerging Economic Issues from the States' Point of view", in V.S. Jafa, ed, *Federal India: Emerging Issues*, New Delhi, Indian Tax Institute, 1999.

20 Jairam Ramesh, "Defending New Delhi in the Debate on Greater Fiscal Autonomy to Status", *India Today*, 7 August 2000.

and child development are the major areas in which programmes are funded on a 75:25 basis between the Centre and the States. The other transfers are in the form of grants the States do not have to repay.

While the dominance of the Centre is a part of the constitutional design, it is reinforced by the pattern of transfer of federal finance. An important aspect of this transfer is that a major portion is within the discretionary powers of the Centre. In a situation where most of the programmes are planned by the Centre and most of the finances also flow from the Centre but have to be implemented by the States, both the levels must have sustained interest and commitment to the programmes. The commitment of the States, however, is limited to the flow of central funds and is often determined by the 'quantum of the funds' that the Centre is ready to provide; any commitment to the programme is, at best, tentative and uncertain; "States give great importance to the bureaucratic paraphernelia that has to be installed in order to see that funds keep flowing in and often ignore the objectives for which it has been set up. This leads to a strange situation. The Centre is free to articulate a specific policy and allocate funds for its implementation, while the States, on the other hand, accept the funds without being committed to fulfilling the objectives of the policy".[21] The States have their own patterns of power and party politics and have the vast administrative network for implementation. They have great 'potentialities to disregard the central initiatives, 'distort' them and even use the funds without paying much attention to the achievement of objectives. Yet the States often argue that Central funds are necessary to pursue programmes of development and complain constantly about the insufficiency of funds. Moreover, it is observed in many situations that the State functionaries under the central government framework act much more within the acceptable framework. But when the same set of functionaries work at the State level, their functioning is found wanting.[22] The 'erosion of institutions' [23] especially the bureaucracy, has been more consequential at the level of the States. Since development plans are to be implemented by the state level institutions and functionaries, their institutional status and functioning are important.

A more balanced view of Indian federalism should however take cognisance of the trend towards 'federalising' the Indian polity. This has been reinforced recently by political developments, particularly the rise of regional parties, the economic initiatives of the liberalisation policy and some constitutional initiatives (e.g. 73rd and 74th Amendments, and the creation of a single pool of central taxes[24]). These are aimed at a greater devolution of power to the States and to

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21 Kuldeep Mathur, *Bureaucracy and the Agricultural Strategy*, New Delhi, Concept, 1982. P.8.

22 See observations in another context, Report of the High Powers Committee, *Response of the State Government to the Audit Reports of CAG of India*. New Delhi : Comptroller & Auditor General, 1993.

23 This is elaborated below in Chapter X, "Institutional Crisis and Governance."

24 In an effort to provide greater statutory financial allocation through tax sharing through the Finance Commission, the 89th Amendment passed by

grassroots institutions and will permit greater initiatives to the States. Some State governments have indeed taken some initiatives quite successfully. These changes should lead to a new balance in federal relations and a new equilibrium in the conception and implementation of development programmes.

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the Lok Sabha aimed to create a single divisible pool of central taxes, in place of dividing only the income tax and excise duties under articles 270 and 272. This recommendation emanated from the Tenth Finance Commission in 1994, became a part of the Central Budget in 1996, and was approved by the Inter-State Council in 1997. The Eleventh Finance Commission has earmarked 29.5 % of the central pool as the States' share.

The provisions of the constitution in this regard are important because of the commitment in the highest law of the land and the cognisance that the judiciary has been taking in its deliberations. The operation of the planned development was to be carried out within the federal scheme.

The federal dynamics, however, has introduced certain distortions in the working and implementation of the programmes of development. The `regionalisation of politics', with more and more importance to the regional forces and regional parties, the era of coalition governments at the Centre and in the States and the absence of any clear demarcation of political alliances have introduced new dimensions in Centre-State relations. Success in the plans for development depends on the link between the distribution of formal powers in the federation and the prevailing political equations. States are 'strategically' placed between the central plans and funds on the one hand, and, on the other, the social realities where the plans are to reach finally.[25]

60% of the federal transfers are at the discretion of the central government.

Nothwithstanding the institution of powers in the federating units, the programmes of social development are part of the central plans; in spite of all the emphasis and legal steps, decentralised planning has remained a distant dream.

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25 S.N. Jha , "Who shall Survive? Dynamics of Local Institutions and Entrenched Interests in India', in K. S. Arya, J. E. Verma and K.K. Sharma (eds.) Rural Development in India: Some Facts,Chardigarh, DAVC, 1985.

# Chapter 5

## Population & Family Planning

*While global population has increased during this century from 2 billion to 6 billion, the population of India has increased nearly five times from 238 million to 1 billion in the same period. India's current annual increase in population 15.5 million is large enough to neutralise efforts to conserve the resource endowment and environment.'"[1]*

In 1951-52, India was the typically agrarian low-income country with high birth and death rates. The death rate, in the region of 28 per thousand in the decade 1941-50, reflected poor diet, insufficient sanitation, and an absence of effective health services. The birth rate was 40 per thousand in this period, so the rate of natural increase over the decade worked out to 12.6 per thousand. Till 1921, birth and death rates remained at high levels, resulting in a sluggish growth of population, but in the 1920s, a decline in the death rate set in, and, with birth rates still at a high level, there occurred an explosive growth of population. Birth rates have since declined, but the fall in the death rate has been far greater (table 5.1) While overall, the rate of population growth has shown a tendency to fall, in absolute terms, the increase in numbers has continued to be explosive (table 5.2).

Table 5.1. India: Birth and Death Rates 1951-1997

| Decade /Year | Birth Rate (per 1000) | Death Rate (per 1000) |
|---|---|---|
| 1951-61 | 41.7 | 22.8 |
| 1961-71 | 41.1 | 18.9 |
| 1971 | 36.9 | 14.9 |
| 1981 | 33.9 | 12.5 |
| 1991 | 29.3 | 9.8 |
| 1997 | 27.2 | 8.9 |

Sources: Victor Petrov, *India, Spotlight on Population*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1985; Registrar General, *Sample Registration Bulletin's*, June 1987, January 1995, *October 1998.*

Table 5. 2. India's Population, 1951-1991

| Year | Population | Growth Rate ( %) |
|---|---|---|

1 National Population policy 2000, Department of Family Welfare, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India, New Delhi. p.1.

| | million) | |
|---|---|---|
| 1951 | 361 | 13.3 (b) |
| 1961 | 479 | 21.6 (b) |
| 1971 | 548 | 24.8 (b) |
| 1981 | 683 | 24.7 (b) |
| 1991 | 846 | 23.8 (b) |
| 1996 (a) | 934 | 17.6 (c) |
| 1997 (a) | 950 | 15.7 (c) |
| 2000 (a) | 997 | 15.7 (c) |
| 2002 (a) | 1027 | 15.4 (c) |
| 2010 (a) | 1162 | 16.8 (c) |

Note: (a) projected, (b) growth rate in the preceding decade, (c) increase in population.

Source: Census of India 1991, *Final Population Tables, Paper 2 of 1992,* 2 2000. (Website)

# The Family Planning Programme

The first and second plans emphasised the need to reduce fertility and suggested a number of means to achieve that goal. The strategies envisaged include

- ☑ provision for advice on family planning methods in government hospitals and health centres.
- ☑ methods of family planning to be experimented upon to determine their suitability and effectiveness.
- ☑ a suitable strategy to induce people to adopt family planning methods to be worked out.
- ☑ collection of data on attitudes towards and motivation for family size.
- ☑ study of economic and social factors that affect population growth.
- ☑ research in physiological and medical aspects of human fertility and its control.
- ☑ training of personnel.
- ☑ testing of contraceptives.
- ☑ medical, biological and demographic researches.

Although officially, family planning as a programme was introduced in 1952, it gathered momentum only in 1966-67, when it was made target-oriented and time-bound In the early stages, the emphasis was on gauging public reaction to the family planning programme. The early plans also emphasised the `health' aspect of family planning; family planning advice was made an integral part of services rendered by government hospitals and public health agencies. As the plans went under way, it became evident that the difficulties in the way could not be easily brushed aside. The Fifth Plan objective of lowering the birth rate from 35 per thousand population at the beginning of the plan to 30 per thousand by 1978-79 could not be achieved; in the fifth and sixth plan periods, the targets for lowering the crude birth rate and the crude death rate respectively were not met; and at the end of the Sixth Plan, the crude birth rate of 33 per thousand and the crude death rate of 14 per thousand fell rather short of targets.

One of the main reasons for the gap between the target and achievement was the poor performance in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. Government evaluations identified the failure to adequately generate active interest in the public and an absence of adequate community participation in the

programme as the reasons behind the shortfall in achievement. Moreover, the acceptance of the small family norm was problematic; lack of motivation has been a major constraint in the achievement of family planning targets.

In the beginning, the programme of family welfare and planning followed the clinical approach, with services extended to those who sought them. Over the successive plans, however, greater emphasis and larger outlays were provided to strengthen the programme. In 1963, it was given an extension education orientation, and with the creation of a new Family Planning Department in the Ministry of Health, it was expanded and extended. The 1975 Emergency saw family planning synonymous with birth control and enforced through coercion by the State machinery. But the Emergency came and went, and the political climate underwent a drastic change, with the result that, in March 1977, the government ruled out coercion. The Draft Sixth Plan, reflecting the change in official thinking, stated that a population policy should reflect concern for the individuals as well as the community's dignity, needs and aspirations; it should deal with overall development issues, and not merely confine itself to population control.[2] The plan document called for greater participation of the States; greater decentralisation and an intensification in the role of voluntary agencies; public participation for social change; and attitudinal acceptance of family planning.

The Seventh Plan envisaged a Net Reproduction Rate of 1 by the year 2000, but government evaluations suggested that such a target was achievable only by 2006-2011. For this purpose, a suitable strategy of implementation was designed with a special focus on the `problem' group States, which accounted for about 33% of the total population.[3] The effective social marketing of contraceptives was another issue that came to be seen as important to the success of family planning; it was realised that in order to achieve long-tern demographic goals, educating people for family planning was essential. Community participation was crucial for the voluntary acceptance of the family welfare programmes, and the role of non-governmental organisations and informal leaders of the community were identified as salient in this context. Participation in Family Planning programmes was to extend to voluntary organisations, NGOs, village health committees, women's organisations, women's clubs, and traditional birth attendants.[4]

# Emerging Policy Directions

The 1980 Report of the Working Group on Population Policy of the Planning Commission identified a `synergistic relationship' between population and development programmes and pointed out that a failure to recognise this would have grave social, economic and political consequences for the country. A two pronged strategy was called for, to

- ☑ develop the necessary level of demand.
- ☑ supply services needed by the people.

Health care, education, water supply and economic factors such as employment, per-capita income and urbanisation were identified as the principal factors with linkages to fertility. Organisational features were considered important as well; an

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2 Debabar Bajerjee. *Population Policies* and *Programmes in India*.

3 Seventh Plan Perspectives, pg. 282.

4 Ibid, p. 255.

institutional framework in the Planning Commission and the Government of India was thought necessary to bring about a better co-ordination at all levels. The Group also highlighted the need for the creation of an extensive database and a comprehensive health information system.

## *National Health Policy 1983*

As a result of an extensive and intensive review of the programme, the union government laid down a new strategy in the National Health Policy of 1983, the important features of which were:

- ☑ Adoption of the 'small family norm' on a voluntary basis.
- ☑ Intensified efforts to spread awareness and information of this concept by effective and imaginative use of multimedia and interpersonal communication strategies.
- ☑ Couples to be free to choose a method suitable to them.
- ☑ Services to be supplied as close to the doorstep as possible.
- ☑ The program to continue as an integral part of health care and socio-economic development.
- ☑ Facilities and efforts for rapid increase in female literacy to be intensified and expanded.
- ☑ Population education to be expanded in schools and colleges.
- ☑ Elected peoples' representatives at all levels to be involved in the programme.
- ☑ Linkages with ministries and departments to be strengthened.
- ☑ Laws relating to minimum age at marriage to be effectively enforced.
- ☑ Maintenance of marriage records.
- ☑ Special attention to West Bengal, UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh.
- ☑ Close monitoring and follow up.

More specifically, two factors were identified as critical to the improvement of the demographic profile. The first of these, infant mortality, continued to be at disturbingly high levels. From the demographic point of view, this has a special import, for it only when couples are confident of child survival will they be willing to opt for fewer children; consequently, reductions in the infant mortality rate are critical to the acceptance of the two child norm. The major causes of the high infant mortality rate were identified to include infection (such as respiratory disease, diarrhoeal disease and others), dehydration, and malnutrition. High morbidity and mortality among infants and children were attributed also to common communicable diseases like diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis, childhood tuberculosis, and typhoid fever. These were to be controlled through the immunisation programme under each plan period. Efforts were to be directed towards achieving self-sufficiency in the production of vaccines, and extensive immunisation programmes were to be popularised with the help of media.

The second of the two critical factors identified - the high level of maternal mortality - reflects the need for better medical attention for expectant mothers. The Seventh Plan states that "more than two thirds of the women in rural areas are still being attended by untrained *dais*". Overall, the framework of Family Planning sought to provide greater flexibility to the States with respect to the programmes relating to birth-spacing and `couple protection', especially of the younger age group. Special Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns were to be organised to remove the bias against female children, and the media was to play an important role in this regard. Village Health Committees and *mahila mandals* were to be actively involved in these programmes.

Importantly, Maternal and child health (MCH) was given a major thrust in the National Health Policy. “Health care for mothers and children” was sought to be strengthened through the primary health care approach, which included integrated, comprehensive MCH care and strengthening of referral services. While the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 (MTP) provided the legislative measure for improving maternal health through the stipulation of conditions under which pregnancies may be terminated, the gradual progress in the programme required making MTP readily available to women. The popularising of MTP included both intensive education and publicity. At a more fundamental level, the care of the pregnant and nursing mothers was to be popularised through education, as also through the media.

## *The Family Planning Programme’s Changing Face*

Over the years, the family planning programme has gradually become more broad-based. What began as a population control program, grew into a welfare programme for the family. Family welfare has come to include welfare of the mother (pregnant and nursing) and children, nutrition, a health conscious environmental component (i.e., pollution etc.) and a focus on the girl-child. Programmes are undertaken for special development of each of these categories. At another level, the credibility of the family planning programme was strengthened by the passing of unanimous resolutions in its support, in several of the State legislatures. It is noteworthy also that greater emphasis was placed in the Seventh and the Eighth Plans on ‘Operational Behaviour Research’, with a view to popularising existing family planning methods, increasing their acceptability, and removing and reducing the complications or inconveniences associated with various methods of family planning. More recently, family planning targets have been abolished and the emphasis has shifted away to reproductive health.

## *Nutrition and Child Survival*

Nutritional deficiency is a cause of most deaths among young children. `Approximately half of the deaths in India among children under 6 years of age are due to severe and fatal malnutrition’.[5] Malnutrition was seen in the plans mainly as a problem of poverty, due to which a large number of the poor could not afford a ‘balanced diet’[6]. Since the early plans, schemes have been introduced for combating the problem of malnutrition. It was recognised that production of more food was needed to solve the problem of malnutrition and to improve the nutritional status of the population, hence there was a need to stress on agriculture and its allied activities It was recognised also that children and pregnant and nursing mothers were especially vulnerable. Over the years, the range of direct interventions expanded to cover supplementary feeding of children and mothers, production of nutritious foods, fortification of foods, nutrition and health education of mothers, and prophylactic programmes against identified nutritional deficiencies. In the fifth Plan, supplementary feeding programmes were brought under the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) and also became a component of

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5 Child Survival, Health and Nutrition: Impact of Green Revolution, p. 195.

6 Eight Plan, p. 400.

ICDS. In the Sixth Plan, a substantial increase in allocation for poverty allocation programmes was visualised as a means to increase the purchasing power of the rural poor so as to enhance food intake.

During the first three plans, nutrition formed one of the components of the health sector and was not singled out as such for specific plan programmes. It was only in the Fourth Plan that an Integrated Nutrition Programme was introduced. By 1973, the Applied Nutrition Programme introduced in 1960 was extended to all the States and Union Territories. It aimed at spreading the concept of balanced diets, production and consumption of protective food and proper techniques of cooking. In the Fifth Plan, the Mid-Day Meal programme (MDM) for providing supplementary food to school children was introduced in 1962-63 as a part of the Minimum Needs Programme in the State sector. The Special Nutrition Programme (SNP) for school children and pregnant women and nursing mothers, introduced in 1970-71 and originally launched as a Central programme, was transferred to the State sector in the fifth Plan as a part of the Minimum Needs Program. Since the start of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme in 1975-76, the Special Nutrition Programme has been in operation as a part of the ICDS projects, although there are feeding centres outside this project also.

The future government strategy reflects the need to emphasise the value of diversification and improvement of diets. These include - increased production of cereals and pulses, green leafy vegetables, fruits, eggs, fish, and milk, and their availability at an affordable rate. Direct nutrition intervention programmes will need to focus on children below 6 years of age, adolescent girls, and pregnant and nursing mothers, those belonging to lower income groups, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and those living in drought prone, backward and hill areas, and in urban slums. Special attention was to be given to tackle the nutritional problems of anaemia, vitamin-A deficiency, goitre and flourosis. Area-specific nutritional problems need especially to be looked into and community participation emphasised for the success of nutrition programmes and optimal utilisation of the public distribution system. The long-term nutrition policy aims at increasing the functional efficiency of the labour force and other segments of the population by promoting the concept of balanced intake with locally available balanced food commodities. The nutrition policy should also achieve reduction in infant and maternal mortality rates and bring about changes in the prevailing patterns of morbidity.

## *National Population Policy 2000*

Noting the demographic achievements in terms of reduced birth rate (from 40.8 in 1951 to 26.4 in 1998), bringing down of the infant mortality rate (from 146/1000 in 1951 to 72/1000 in 1998), enhancement of the couple protection rate (from 10.4% in 1971 to 44% in 1999), reduction of the crude death rate (from 25 to 1951 to 9.0 in 1998), increase of life expectancy (from 37 years to 62 years), reduction of the fertility rate (from 6.0 in 1951 to 3.3 in 1997), and increasing awareness about family planning, the National Population Policy (NPP) emphasises the need for population stabilisation. Taking a comprehensive view of the process, the Policy acknowledges that `it is as much a function of making reproductive health care accessible and affordable for all, as of increasing the provision and outreach of primary and secondary education, and extending basic amenities, including sanitation, safe drinking water and housing, besides empowering women and enhancing their employment opportunities and providing transport and communication'. The declaration by the NPP is almost a charter for all round

social development; `… spread of literacy and education, increasing availability of affordable reproductive and child health services, convergence of service delivery at village levels, participation of women in the paid work force, together with a steady, equitable improvement in family incomes, will facilitate early achievement of the socio-demographic goals'. Specific policy initiatives are outlined `… to simultaneously address issues of child survival, maternal health, and contraception, while increasing outreach and coverage of a comprehensive package of reproductive and child health services by government, industry and the voluntary non-government sector, in partnership'.

The NPP recognises that high population growth in India is caused by the large size of the reproductive age–group, unmet need for contraception, high infant mortality rate[7] leading to the desire to have more children and early marriage of girls, resulting in a reproductive pattern of "too early, too frequent and too many". The contribution of the first three of these identified causes to the growth of population is shown in table 5.3).

## Table 5.3. Estimated Contribution of Key Factors to Growth in Population

| Causes | % |
|---|---|
| Large reproductive age-group | 58 |
| Unmet need for contraception | 20 |
| High Infant Mortality Rate | 20 |

Source : National Population Policy

To achieve its objective of population stabilisation, the NPP identifies the following `strategic themes'

- ☑ Decentralised planning and programme implementation
- ☑ Convergence of service delivery at village levels
- ☑ Empowering women for improved health and nutrition
- ☑ Child health and survival.
- ☑ Meeting the unmet need for family welfare services. (Urban slums, tribal communities, Hill Area population, displaced and migrant population, and adolescents are the sectors to be specifically targeted).
- ☑ Increased participation of men in planned parenthood.
- ☑ Diverse health care providers.
- ☑ Collaborations with non-governmental organisations and the private sector.
- ☑ Contraceptive technology and research on reproductive and child care.
- ☑ Information, Education and Communication (IEC).

7 Satish B. Agnihotri, *op. cit.*, Chapter-3.

The NPP provides detailed operational strategies for achieving its objectives, including the creation of some new structures at the national and the state levels (e.g. Commission on Population). It also advocates a freeze on the number of seats in the Union Parliament, on the ground that States which have successfully restricted population growth face a disadvantage in respect to parliamentary seats, whose numbers are determined on the basis of population; the States which have not been able to restrict their population benefit by having more seats and thus gain politically.

# Demographic Process & Policy Fallout

## *Fertility Differentials by Social Group*

It is held by many that the high fertility rate among Muslims compared to the Hindus[8] is an obstacle in the path of population control. High fertility rates among Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe groups are similarly noted (Table 5.4) This view is contested by others who point out that “cultural aspects of fertility change” (including religion) are “inevitably misleading” and that “social, political and economic contexts” are important for any understanding of variations in the fertility rate.[9]

## *Inter State Variations in Population Growth*

The Inter-State variation in population growth (table 5.5) and other demographic characteristics, has been another point of debate with policy implications. Besides the variation is absolute numbers (U.P with 139 million and Sikkim with 0.41 million), the decadal growth rate is lowest in Kerala (14.3%) and highest in Rajasthan (28.4). More interestingly, the data bear testimony to a North-South divide in demographic transitions. The larger BIMARU States (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and U.P.) register higher growth rates, while for Kerala and Tamil Nadu the figures are relatively low at 14.3 and 15.4 respectively. *The growth rate in Rajasthan works out to as much as twice that of Kerala!* A North-South Divide is evident also in the Infant Mortality Rate (Table 5.6). The policy implications of these regional variations, in terms of the special efforts that need to be made for the backward areas, have not gone unnoticed, as noted elsewhere in this chapter.

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8 K.Moulasha and G.R.Rao,”Religion Specific differentials in Fertility and Family Planning”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, No 442, 1999.

9 Roger Jeffery and Patricia Jeffery, “Religion and Fertility in India”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXV, No 35 and 36, 2000. p.3528

Table 5.4. Total Fertility Rates by Religion and Residence, Major States, India, 1978

| States | Rural | | | Urban | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hindus | S.C | Muslim | Hindu | S.C. | Muslim |
| Andhra Pradesh | 3.99 | 3.94 | 4.99 | 2.66 | 3.24 | 3.14 |
| Bihar | 4.23 | 4.34 | 4.30 | 3.33 | 2.96 | 4.05 |
| Gujarat | 4.61 | 4.61 | 4.58 | 3.64 | 4.37 | 3.84 |
| Haryana | 4.61 | 5.36 | 4.65 | 3.20 | 4.15 | 3.24 |
| Karnataka | 3.70 | 3.59 | 3.83 | 2.94 | 3.54 | 3.69 |
| Kerala | 2.49 | 2.74 | 4.15 | 1.92 | 2.18 | 3.63 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 5.36 | 5.95 | 5.45 | 3.77 | 3.90 | 4.09 |
| Maharashtra | 3.62 | 4.18 | 4.74 | 2.64 | 3.38 | 3.81 |
| Orrisa | 4.30 | 3.93 | 6.34 | 3.47 | 3.77 | 4.12 |
| Punjab | 4.39 | 4.78 | NA | 3.18 | 4.23 | NA |
| Rajasthan | 5.50 | 5.58 | 5.92 | 3.77 | 4.39 | 5.34 |
| Tamil Nadu | 3.43 | 3.70 | 3.64 | 2.67 | 2.94 | 3.24 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 5.82 | 5.98 | 6.39 | 3.21 | 4.74 | 3.88 |
| West Bengal | 3.32 | 3.98 | 4.55 | 2.29 | 4.49 | 4.30 |
| India | 4.48 | 4.78 | 5.01 | 2.97 | 3.88 | 3.98 |

Source: Roger Jeffery and Patricia Jeffrey, "Religion and Fertility in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXV, Nos. 35 and 36, 2000.

## *Political Demography*

On the basis of projections of the Population Foundation of India, it is indicated that "the population of BIMARU States will increase from 39.6 per cent in 1991 to 51.4 per cent in 2051, while the population of the southern states will decrease from 23.22 per cent in 1991 to 16.5 per cent in 2051"[10] This has important implications for `political demography', given the contradiction of `rewarding' the States that have been unable to control their population (Table 5.7). The National Population Policy of 1975 and 1977 had suggested a `freeze' on the number of Lok Sabha seats, and the issue merited attention also in a report of the

10 Ashish Bose, "North-South Divide in Indian Demographic Secne", *Economic and political Weekly*, Vol. XXXV, No.20, 2000, p.1699.

Swaminathan Committee in 1994. A freeze was brought into effect by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment. The NPP 2000 has recommended that it be extended to the year 2026.

## Table 5.5. Growth Rate of Population in Major States 1981-91 (Percentage)

| State | Decadal Growth Rate 1981-91 |
|---|---|
| Andhra Pradesh | 24.2 |
| Assam | 24.2 |
| Bihar | 23.5 |
| Gujarat | 21.2 |
| Haryana | 27.24 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 20.8 |
| Jammu and Kashmir | 28.9 |
| Karrnataka | 21.1 |
| Kerala | 14.3 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 26.8 |
| Maharashtra | 25.7 |
| Orrisa | 26.1 |
| Punjab | 20.8 |
| Rajasthan | 28.4 |
| Tamil Nadu | 15.4 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 25.4 |
| West Bengal | 24.7 |

Source: Ashish Bose, "Population: The Quest for Stabilisation" in Hiranmay Karlekar (Ed), Independent *India: The First Fifty Years*, Oxford University Press, 1998.

## Table 5.6 Infant and Child Mortality Rates 1988-99 (per 1000)

| Region | State | IMR | Child Mortality (1-4) | Under-5 Mortality |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| o rt | Uttar Pradesh | 86.7 | 39.2 | 122.5 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Madhya Pradesh | 86.1 | 56.4 | 137.6 |
| | Rajasthan | 80.0 | 37.6 | 114.9 |
| | Bihar | 73.0 | 34.6 | 105.1 |
| South | Andhra Pradesh | 65.0 | 21.0 | 84.7 |
| | Karnataka | 51.5 | 18.9 | 69.4 |
| | Tamil Nadu | 48.2 | 15.9 | 63.3 |
| | Kerala | 16.3 | 2.6 | 18.8 |

Source: Ashish Bose .2000. `North-South Divide in India's Demographic Scene', Economic & Political Weekly. XXXV (20)

## *Population Stabilisation*

A one billion strong population is an enormous "demographic burden" on the country, though other characteristics are also clearly unfavourable, notably, success on the mortality front unmatched by a similar success an fertility front.[11] Fertility decline is critical to population growth, and demographers consider a Total Fertility Rate of 2.1 as pointing towards "the way for population stabilisation".[12] It may be noted, in this context, that the birth rate trends in Kerala and Tamil Nadu are quite striking (table 5.8) Estimates in fact show that Kerala and Tamil Nadu have already achieved stabilisation levels (table 5.9). Developments in Andhra Pradesh, also encouraging, attest to `a rapid fertility decline' – an 18 per cent decline in the Total Fertility between 1987-89 and 1992-94, and a TFR of 2.7 in 1994.[13], In fact, it is estaimated that Andhra Pradesh will achieve stabilisation in the year 2002 (table 5.9). By contrast, the BIMARU States have a long way to go (table 5.9).

## Table 5.7. Number of Lok Sabha Seats if the Current Freeze is Lifted

| Region | State | Year | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1991 | 2001 | 2016 |

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11 Ashish Bose, "Population: The Quest for stabilization ", in Hiramay Karlekar, ed., *Independent India: The First Fifty yearls*, Oxford University Press, 1998.p. 319.

12 Ashish Bose, `North South Divide', op.cit.

13 K.S. James, "Fertility Decline in Andhra Pradesh: A Search for Alternative Hypothesis", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.XXXIV, No.8, 1999.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| North | Uttar Pradesh | 85 | 99 |
| | Bihar | 54 | 56 |
| | Madhya Pradesh | 40 | 44 |
| | Rajasthan | 25 | 30 |
| | Total | 204 | 229 |
| South | Andhra Pradesh | 42 | 39 |
| | Tamil Nadu | 39 | 31 |
| | Karnataka | 28 | 27 |
| | Kerala | 20 | 16 |
| | Total | 129 | 113 |

Source: Ashish Bose, "North-South Divide in Indian's Demographic Scene", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXV, No.20, 2000.

Table 5.8. Crude Birth Rates in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Nineteen Fifties to Nineteen Seventies.

| | Period | State | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Kerala | Tamil Nadu | India |
| CBR | 1951-60 | 38.9 | 34.9 | 41.7 |
| | 1961-70 | 37.5 | 36.8 | 41.2 |
| | 1971-81 | 26.9 | 30.8 | 36.6 |
| % Decline in CBR | 50-51 – 71-81 | 30.8 | 11.7 | 12.2 |
| | 61-71 - 71-81 | 19.3 | 17.9 | 12.5 |

Source**:** H.P. Raayappa and N.R. Prabhakara, "Demographic Transition in South", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.18, No.48, 1983.

Table 5.9. Year by which the Total Fertility Rate will reach the Population Stabilisation Point of 2.1, Selected States.

| State | Year |
|---|---|
| Kerala | 1983 |
| Tamil Nadu | 1993 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 2002 |
| Karnataka | 2009 |
| Rajasthan | 2019 |
| Bihar | 2039 |
| Madhya Pradesh | Beyond 2060 |
| Uttar Pradesh | Beyond 2100 |

Source: Registrar General's Expert Committee on Population Projections, 1997. (Quoted in Ashish Bose, "North-South Divide...op.cit.).

While the experiences of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have been varied, they have important policy implication both for initiatives in other States and for programmes of social development. Kerala's demographic transition is explained in terms of multiple factors: enlightened rulers of Travancore and Cochin gave a head start to the region in health and education, which was further promoted by the Christian Missionaries; social reforms; mass movements; Marxist government initiating land reforms; high investment in social development programmes; favourable status of women; high age at marriage age of girls; large scale migration to the Gulf, easing population pressure and unemployment and increasing per capita real income; and better management of the family planning programme.[14] Tamil Nadu does not share many of the characteristics of Kerala, but has still been able to achieve replacement levels of fertility. The factors important for Tamil Nadu are `a motivated government, a high degree of political will, the impact of the mid-day meal scheme `…and the total involvement of bureaucracy"[15] The prospects of Andhra Pradesh catching up with Kerala and Tamil Nadu are encouraging; "significant progress in the antenatal care of pregnant women …significant changes …in labour market in the rural areas …the general welfare measures by the government … in poverty alleviation ... in the 1980s … have not only reduced poverty but also have had some impact on fertility decisions of the people."[16]

## *Demographic Ageing*

Declines in the rates of fertility and of mortality in the country have resulted in the rise of the percentage of older people (above 60 years of age) from 6.0 in 1971 to 6.5 in 1981 to 6.7 in 1991.[17] The demographic histories of the States in the

14 Asish Bose, "Population: The Quest for Stablilisation", *op.cit.*.

15 Ibid, 331.

16 K.S. James, *op.cit.*, p. 498.

17 *Selected Socio-Economic statistics, Indian, 1998,* Government of India, Central Statistical Organisation. Table 5.

country have been diverse, and hence, there are significant State-wise variations in this ageing process (Table 5.10). In absolute numbers, "while there were only 24 million elderly in 1961, there were 52.4 million in 1991. They are expected to number 75.9 million in 2001, virtually tripling themselves in this 40 year period".[18] However, the national policy for the older people formulated by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 1999 has been found inadequate on many counts. [19]

## Table 5.10. Proportion of Aged Population, State Wise, 1991.

| State | Proportion of Elderly |
|---|---|
| Andhra Pradesh | 6.46 |
| Assam | 5.29 |
| Bihar | 6.05 |
| Guajrat | 6.15 |
| Haryana | 7.47 |
| Karnataka | 6.76 |
| Kerala | 8.77 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 6.43 |
| Maharashtra | 6.91 |
| Orissa | 6.98 |
| Punjab | 7.56 |
| Rajasthan | 6.06 |
| Tamil Nadu | 7.29 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 6.65 |
| West Bengal | 6.00 |

Source: R. Irudaya, U.S. Mishra and P.S. Sarma, *India's Elderly: Berden or Challenge,* New Delhi, Sage, 1999.

Detailed analysis of the elderly population indicates that the percentage of widowed elderly is strikingly higher for females than for males – 64% for women and 19.4% for men. "This was more sharp for those over 70 years: 77percent for women as against 22 percent for men".[20] Keeping in view the changes taking place in the socio-economic structure of Indian Society, a well-worked out and

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18 Leela Gulati and S.Irudaya", The Added Years: Elderly in India and Kerala", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Review of Women studies, Vol.XXXIV, No.44, 1999. P.WS-51.

19 C.P. Sujaya, Some Comments on National Policy on Older Persons", *Economic and Political Weekly,* Review of Women Studies, Vol.XXXIV, No.44, 1999.

20 Ibid.

effective programme for persons in the elderly category will be important for development initiatives. Special attention will need to be paid to the female elderly.

The containment of population growth and an improvement in the quality of health were most pressing issues for policy making. Health and family planning were clubbed together and the family planning programme expanded to include family and child welfare. The population policy encompasses health, nutrition and family welfare.

, the quantitative aspect includes reduction in the size of the population, mainly through family planning and also, nutrition and child development.

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# Chapter 6

# The Health Sector

The provision of health services for the entire population constitutes an important element of the Directive Principles of State Policy. To fulfil this mandate, a number of institutions have been created. At the national level, the official organs of the health system consist of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), and the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare. The Centre is mainly responsible for policy making, planning, guiding, assisting, evaluating and co-ordinating the work of the State Health Ministries, so that health services cover the entire country. Constitutionally, `public health and sanitation, hospitals and dispensaries' are in the State List. Like the Centre, the States too have Ministries and Directorates of Health.

## Plan Achievements

Achievements in the health sector during the First Plan period included setting up of health infrastructure - the opening of new hospitals, dispensaries, health units and maternity and child-health centres. The principal developments related to the expansion of health services were initiatives to improve water supply and sanitation, control communicable diseases and train personnel. `Following the recommendation of the Health Survey and Development Committee of 1946, a chain of primary health centres was envisaged. These were intended to serve as focal points for the development of curative and preventive health in rural areas. They were a part of the Community Development Blocks and were financed under the Community Development Programme. 725 Primary Health Centres were established during the First Plan. Training facilities for the personnel in the health centres were provided at three re-orientation-training centres at Singure, Poonamale and Najafgarh.

Water Supply and sanitation (both rural and urban) constituted a major thrust area under the health services: "The provision of safe and adequate water supply is a basic pre-requisite in a country in which a large number of persons become victims of water and filth-borne diseases". The central government also set up a nucleus central public health engineering organisation at the office of the Director-General of Health Services for examining the technical aspects of the schemes proposed by State Governments. Some steps were taken to expand training facilities in Public Health Engineering as well, with the All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta, the Roorkee Engineering University, and the Guindy Engineering College providing a year's course leading to a Master's degree in the subject.

For the control of communicable diseases like Malaria and Filariasis, special programmes were undertaken. Measures for combating Tuberculosis included the BCG vaccination, which began in 1948 and was soon expanded. Further programmes of treatment, study, survey and research were undertaken for curing leprosy and a beginning was made with regard to the treatment of and research on several other diseases.

The government also provided for research in alternative medicine, including indigenous medicinal systems. Under this programme, assistance was extended to the Central Institute of Research in Indigenous Systems of Medicine at Jamnagar, and support was given to research in ayurvedic, unani, homeopathic and nature cure systems.

In view of the shortages of medical and auxiliary staff, the training of health personnel had a high priority in the programme for developing health services. During the first Plan, the number of medical colleges increased from 30 to 42 and the number of annual admissions to them rose from 2500 to 3500. The training of personnel like nurses, midwives, *dais*, *nurse-dais* and the ANM (Auxiliary Nurse & Midwife) was also expanded. The All India Institute of Medical Science was set up and research and training facilities were improved in several of the institutes and research centres. With the establishment of a public sector penicillin factory in March 1955, facilities for drug production were improved.

A new phase began with the Fifth and Sixth Plans. These were, in general, `mprovement plans'. Their programmes aimed at increasing the accessibility of health services, correcting regional imbalances, and developing referral services by removing the deficiencies in district and subdivisional hospitals. Further, a policy emphasis was made on the intensification of the programme for control and eradication of communicable disease like Malaria and Smallpox. In the 5$^{th}$ Plan, a substantial increase in the outlay for the National Malaria Eradication Programme became necessary to contain the disease according to a revised strategy. Provision also became more effective for the implementation of National Leprosy Control and the control of blindness. Another policy prong was the education and training of health personal and the development of referral services via provision of specialist attention to common diseases in rural areas. The Minimum Needs Programme was the main instrument through which health infrastructure in the rural areas was expanded and further strengthened to ensure primary health care to the rural population. It is noteworthy also that the 5th Plan for the first time proposed inclusion of health education in the school curriculum.

Developments in the international sphere also had a role to play in the health scene. Thus, India adopted the policy of *Health for All by 2000 AD,* enunciated at Alma Ata Declaration in 1977. In this context, rural health care was proposed to be developed as a speciality and various programs of education, water supply and sanitation, control of communicable diseases, family planning, maternal and child health care were to be implemented in a co-ordinated manner. More medical personnel were to be put into action for better performance.

In the Sixth Plan period, the National Health Policy was formulated. `The National Health Policy (1982) was evolved within a fully integrated planning framework which sought to provide universal comprehensive primary health care services relevant to the actual needs and priorities of the community at a cost which people can afford. The planning and implementation of various health programs were to be through the organised involvement and participation of the community, and also by adequately utilising the services being rendered by private voluntary organisation active in the health sector'.[1] The policy underlined the need of restructuring health services around the following approaches:

- ☑ Provision of a well-dispersed network of primary health care services with the organised support of volunteers, auxiliaries, paramedics, and adequately trained multipurpose workers.

- ☑ Backup support to primary health care through a well worked out referral system.

- ☑ Full utilisation of untapped resources through organised logical and technical support to voluntary agencies active in the health field.

- ☑ Priority to be accorded to people living in tribal, hill and backward areas and to populations affected by endemic diseases.[2]

With its stress on rural health infrastructure, the Sixth Plan outlined these norms for making a stronger rural health sector.

- ☑ One Community Health Volunteer for every village or a population of 1000 chosen by the community to form the base unit.

- ☑ One sub-centre for a population of 5000 in plains and 3000 in hilly and tribal areas.

- ☑ One Public Health Centre for 30,000 population in the plains and 20,000 in hilly and tribal areas.

- ☑ One Community Health Centre for population of one lakh or one C.D. Block".[3]

- ☑ The Community Health Volunteer Scheme and the scheme of training and employment of multipurpose workers to be continued under the Minimum Needs Programme.

The Seventh Plan sought to actively promote the norms envisaged in the 6th Plan and aimed at the consolidation of the health infrastructure by making up the

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1 Government of India, *Statement on National Health Policy*, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 1982.
2 K. Venkat Anil Kumar.
3 Sixth Five Year Plan, p. 224.

deficiencies with regard to training of personnel, equipment, and other physical facilities.

In the urban areas, the health services were to be made more widespread and efficient by creating a network of hospitals with specialised services in district hospitals. It was recognised that urban hospitals and medical facilities act as a referral system as well for the rural areas, hence there was a need to develop them further. Drug Control and Medical Stores Organisation, Prevention of Food Adulteration, Training and Manpower Development, Blood Bank and Transfusion Services were other important areas focussed upon in the Seventh Plan.

The Eight Plan's thrust areas were on -

- ☑ Major investment in development and strengthening of primary health care infrastructure, aimed at improvement in quality and outreach of services.
- ☑ Consolidation and expansion of the secondary healthcare infrastructure up to and including the district level services.
- ☑ Optimisation of the functioning of tertiary care.
- ☑ Building up of referral and linkage system so that optional utilisation of available facilities is possible at each level."[4]

Concerted efforts were made to ensure that essential health-care for the most needy sections of the populations are met. Some important steps in this regard included efforts to consolidate and strengthen the primary health care infrastructure with ear-marked funding under the Minimum Needs Programme; enhanced assistance to regions with severe problems, e.g. 100% assistance under the National Malaria Eradication Programme (NMEP) for tribal areas and north-eastern States plagued by Falciparum Malaria; enhanced central assistance to specific programmes to meet the cost of treatment, such as tests for the screening of donated blood so as to check whether it is infected with the HIV virus; cost of drugs for short course chemotherapy for tuberculosis; and cost for cataract surgery for the elderly. Specific efforts were also made to promote the Indian system of Medicare and Homeopathy. Another notable feature of the Eighth Plan was its support to the involvement of voluntary organisations.[5]

# Public Expenditure on Health

Table 6.1 shows the government expenditure on health and other functional categories. Despite continuous increase in non-defence expenditure, the percentage of expenditure allotted for health has been sluggish over the years. It may be noted that the Health Survey and Development Committee of 1946 (the Bhore Committee) recommended that 15% of the total public expenditure should

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4 Government of India, *Draft Mid Term Appraisal of the 8th Five Year Plan, 1992*, Planning Commission, September 1996.

5 *Ibid.* p. 104.

be on the health sector. However, the actual figures of expenditure in the first six plan periods have been less than the recommended target. The Health Survey and Planning Committee of 1961 (Mudaliar Committee) had reduced the target to a 10% of the total public expenditure. Even by that criterion, the expenditures in the first six plans have been insufficient (table 6.1). Given the magnitude of health needs, the government's expenditure on health has been extremely inadequate.

Table 6.1. Expenditure on Health in India 1955-1985

| Year | Defence | Non Defence | Health |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1955-56 | 19.77 | 80.22 | 4.25 |
| 1956-60 | 15.79 | 84.40 | 4.36 |
| 1961-65 | 14.8 | 85.8 | 3.49 |
| 1966-68 | 12.95 | 85.91 | 3.48 |
| 1969-73 | 12.95 | 86.91 | 3.04 |
| 1974-78 | 12.37 | 87.42 | 4.21 |
| 1980-85 | 13.07 | 88.42 | 4.14 |

Source: Comptroller and Auditor General of India, *Combined Finance* and Revenue Accounts of Central and State Governments.

In the sectoral allocations of funds for the health, the building of new hospitals, dispensaries and Primary Health Centres, together with control of communicable diseases accounted for a major part of the allocation in the First Plan period. The Second and Third Plans laid more stress on preventive aspects of health (table 6.2). The Integrated Nutrition Programme initiated in the Fourth Plan provided greater integration in the health sector. Maternal and childcare were focussed in the later years.

Table 6.2. Sectoral Allocation for Health Plan Funds Under Various Plans, (Rs. Crores)

| Sector | Plan Period | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I 51-56 | II 56-61 | III 61-66 | 66-69 | IV 67-74 | V 74-79 | VI 80-85 | VII 85-90 |
| Hospital Dispensaries & PHCS | 25 (17.9) | 36 (16) | 37 (14.9) | 25 (11.1) | 88.3 (7.6) | 155.3 (6.7) | 720.1 (10.7) | 39.3 (11.6) |
| Control of Communicable Diseases | 23.1 (16.5) | 64 (24.8) | 69 (27.7) | 23.1 (10.2) | 127 (11.0) | 168.6 (7.2) | 524 (7.8) | 538 (15.8) |
| Education and training | 21.6 (15.4) | 36 (16) | 35 (14.1) | 21.6 (9.6) | 98.2 (8.5) | 111.8 (4.8) | * | * |
| Indigenous system of Medicines | 0.4 (0.3) | 4.0 (1.8) | 4 (1.6) | 4 (1.8) | 15.8 (1.4) | 28.1 (1.2) | * | 43.25 |
| MNP | * | * | * | * | 76.5 (6.6) | 291.5 (12.5) | 577 | 1096.35 |
| Others | 20.2 (14.4) | 6 (2.7) | 5 (2.0) | 20.2 (8.9) | 27.7 (2.4) | 40.9 (1.8) | * | * |
| Total for Health | 90.3 (64.5) | 146 (64.9) | 150 (60.2) | 93.9 (41.6) | 433.5 (37.5) | 796.2 (34.1) | 1821.1 (27.0) | 3392.89 |

Notes: (a) figures in Brackets are percent of Total Plan allocation to health in that sub-sector.
(b)*: This figure includes allocation to 3 other sub-sectors

# Preventive Health Programmes

## A. National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP)

This programme was launched in 1953. According to estimates for 1952-53, about 200 million people resided in the endemic areas, with 75 million cases of malaria occurring annually and eight lakh deaths resulting directly from malaria. The objective of the NMCP was to spray affected areas periodically with DDT so as to lower the transmission level. The success of this programme was phenomenal. The number of malaria cases for every 100 persons visiting hospitals or dispensaries declined form 10.2% in 1953-54 to 4.0% in 1958-59. This led the planners to think in terms of a complete eradication of malaria.[1] NMCP was upgraded in 1958 and renamed National Malaria Eradication Programme (NMEP). This programme was also a success. *While the number of malaria cases in 1947 was 75 million, the 1963 incidence came down to a mere 49,151, with annual mortality down to zero*. In 1963, a Committee to review the NMEP was appointed, with the Director General of Health Services as Chairman. The committee suggested the `vigilance' operation with respect to NMEP as being the responsibility of general health services, at the primary health centre at the block level. One basic health worker per 10,000 of the population was recommended. These workers would also have the additional responsibilities for the collection of vital statistics and family planning. Family Planning Health Assistants were to supervise three or four of basic health workers.

## B. National Tuberculosis Control Programme

The District Tuberculosis Control Program was initiated in 1962. Community control of tuberculosis was started by organised domiciliary treatment. This programme is centrally sponsored. Its strategy comprises (i) detecting active cases in the early stage and treatment through the District Tuberculosis Control Programme and (ii) protecting the health of especially those under 20 years of age by BCG vaccination. Assistance for the programme has been received from international bodies like the Swedish International Development Agency and UNICEF.

## C. National Leprosy Control Programme.

The programme was launched in 1954-55, in collaboration with State governments, to control the disease and enable leprosy patients to benefit from modern treatment facilities. The programme was implemented through the establishment of the Leprosy Control Units / Centres (LCU), the Survey

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1 D. Banaji, *Health and Family Planning Services in India: An Emdemiological Socio-Cultural and Political Analysis and a Perspective,* New Delhi, Lok Prakash, 1978, p. 96.

Education Treatment (SET) Centres, Urban Leprosy Centres, temporary hospitalisation wards, reconstructive surgery units, etc. The programme initially progressed very slowly and developed in phases over 25 years. From the Fourth Plan onwards it was made a centrally sponsored scheme.

## D. Universal Immunisation Programme.

The Universal Immunisation Programme, previously known as the Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI), is a long-term programme aided by UNICEF. This most well known of the country's preventive programmes was launched by the Central government in 1978. Its main objectives were (i) to deliver an integrated immunisation service through primary health centres and sub-centres in rural areas, (ii) to reduce the incidence of diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, and typhoid fever by making vaccination services available to all children and pregnant women, and (iii) to develop a surveillance system to collect adequate information on the diseases preventable by immunisation".[2] Findings from a recent study indicates that overall, immunisation of children was far more extensive in districts covered by the CSSM (Child Survival & Safe Motherhood) Programme.[3]

## *E. Other Programmes*

Apart from the above programmes there are other programmes like the Filarial Control Programme, STD and AIDS Control Programmes, and the programme for the control of goitre. India is also a part of the worldwide WHO programme to protect children from six major diseases: diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, TB, Polio and measles.

## F. Preventive Programmes - Policy Implications.

These preventive programmes had a major influence on the growth and development of health services. Called vertical programmes, they are sponsored by the government at the Centre, and have a uniform line of command for implementation. Each of these programmes has had its own specially trained personnel. Since communicable diseases have accounted for a substantial mortality and morbidity, mass national campaigns have been of much help. But preoccupation with these programmes has meant that an integrated approach for the health sector has suffered.

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2 Government of India, *Swasth Hind*, Vol. XXV, No. 6, 1981, pp. 137-147.

3 B.S. Nagi, Child Survival & Safe Motherhood: Experiences from India. Kanishka Publishers. 2000, pp. 36, 41.

# Planning for Health: Reach & Impact

According to the World Development Report of 1993, 6.0 per cent of GDP was spent on the health sector in India. This compares favourably with corresponding figures in other countries (Table 6.3). Also, the per capita expenditure on health had grown by six times between 1980-81 and 1995-96 (Table 6.4). The Union Government's expenditure in the category `Medical, Public Health & Family Welfare' also has increased from 13% of the total revenue expenditure is 1989-90 to 15% in 1995-96 (Table 6.5). However, according to a detailed analysis, most of the increase was on account of increased allocations since 1992-93 for the National Tuberculosis Control Programme and the National AIDS Control Programme. The National Malaria Eradication Programme also recorded increased allocations since 1993-94".[4]

At a disaggregated level, moreover, data attest to significant State wise variations in health expenditure. Between 1974-75 and 1990-91, real per capita government expenditure on `Medical & Public Health' showed an increasing trend, but some States were ahead of others. Moreover, if this period is broken up into two segments, 1974-75 - 1984-85 and 1985-86 – 1990-91, we find that in the later period, as many as seven States reported a negative growth rate in real per capita revenue expenditure (table 6.6).

Despite the picture of increasing health expenditure and the growth of infrastructure, the health scene in India is quite dismal. Infant Mortality Rates are quite high and the figures are higher in backward states and in rural areas (table 6.7). The link between under-nutrition, morbidity and mortality is the main underlying factor.[5]

Medical attention at birth, also an important factor for child and maternal health, continues to be overwhelmingly of the traditional type, even though, over the years, the proportion of pregnant mothers accessing professional care has grown. At the same time, the rural areas are far less served by professional care (table 6.8). If we take a look at the picture for professional care at the time of death, the picture is broadly similar (Table 6.9).

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4 K. Seeta Probhu, "Structural Adjustment and the Health Sector in India", in Mohan Rao, (Ed), *Disinvestment in Health*, New Delhi, Sage, 1999, P. 121.

5 Mohan Rao, "The Structural Adjustment Programme and the World Development Report 1993: Implications for Family Planning in India", in Mohan Rao, ed. *op cit.* p.100.

Table 6.3. Income & Health Expenditure in 34 Selected Countries.

| Country | GDP Per Capita | Per Cent of GDP Spent on Health | Per Cent of Public Share |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tanzania | 100 | 4.7 | 68.1 |
| Ethiopia | 120 | 3.8 | 60.5 |
| Bangladesh | 220 | 3.2 | 43.8 |
| Zaire | 260 | 2.4 | 33.3 |
| Nigeria | 300 | 2.7 | 44.4 |
| India | 330 | 6.0 | 21.7 |
| Kenya | 340 | 4.3 | 62.8 |
| Pakistan | 400 | 3.4 | 52.9 |
| Sudan | 420 | 3.3 | 15.2 |
| Egypt | 160 | 2.6 | 38.5 |
| Indonesia | 610 | 2.0 | 35.0 |
| Philippines | 730 | 2.0 | 50.0 |
| Morocco | 1030 | 2.6 | 34.6 |
| Syria | 1169 | 2.1 | 19.0 |
| Colombia | 1260 | 4.0 | 45.0 |
| Peru | 1285 | 3.2 | 59.4 |
| Thailand | 1570 | 5.0 | 22.0 |
| Turkey | 1780 | 4.0 | 37.5 |
| Algeria | 1980 | 7.0 | 77.1 |
| Iran | 2170 | 2.6 | 57.7 |
| South Africa | 2560 | 5.6 | 57.1 |
| Venezuela | 1730 | 3.6 | 55.6 |
| Argentina | 1790 | 4.2 | 59.5 |
| Brazil | 1940 | 4.2 | 66.7 |
| Mexico | 3030 | 3.2 | 50.0 |
| South Korea | 6330 | 6.6 | 40.9 |
| Spain | 12450 | 6.6 | 78.8 |
| UK | 16550 | 6.1 | 85.2 |
| Italy | 18520 | 7.5 | 77.3 |
| France | 20380 | 8.9 | 74.2 |
| Canada | 20440 | 9.1 | 74.7 |
| United States | 22240 | 12.7 | 44.4 |
| Germany | 23650 | 8.0 | 72.5 |
| Japan | 26930 | 6.5 | 73.8 |

Source: Calculated from data *in World Development Report 1993.* Quoted in Mohan Rao, (Ed), *Disinvesting in Health,* New Delhi, Sage, 1999.

Table 6.4. Per Capita Expenditure on Health, India, 1980-81-1995-96.

| Year | Per Capita Expenditure |
|---|---|
| 1980-81 | 14 |
| 1981-82 | 17 |
| 1982-83 | 19 |
| 183-84 | 22 |
| 1984-85 | 26 |
| 1985-86 | 29 |
| 1986-87 | 33 |
| 1987-88 | 37 |
| 1988-89 | 42 |
| 1989-90 | 46 |
| 1990-91 | 54 |
| 1991-92 | 57 |
| 1992-93 | 64 |
| 1993-94 | 70 |
| 1994-95 | 77 |
| 1995-96 | 84 |

Source: Selected Socio-Economic Statistic, India, 1998 Central Statistical Organisation, Government of India, New Delhi.

Table 6.4. Per Capita Expenditure on Health, India, 1980-81-1995-96.

| Year | Per Capita Expenditure |
|---|---|
| 1980-81 | 14 |
| 1981-82 | 17 |
| 1982-83 | 19 |
| 183-84 | 22 |
| 1984-85 | 26 |
| 1985-86 | 29 |
| 1986-87 | 33 |
| 1987-88 | 37 |
| 1988-89 | 42 |
| 1989-90 | 46 |
| 1990-91 | 54 |
| 1991-92 | 57 |
| 1992-93 | 64 |
| 1993-94 | 70 |
| 1994-95 | 77 |
| 1995-96 | 84 |

Source: Selected Socio-Economic Statistic, India, 1998 Central Statistical Organisation, Government of India, New Delhi.

Table 6.5: Union Government Revenue Expenditure on Health (1989-1990 to 1994-95)

| Item of Expenditure | Year | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 89-90 (AC) | 90-91 (AC) | 91-92 (AC) | 92-93 (AC) | 93-94 (AC) | 94-95 (AC) | 95-96 (AC) |
| Total Revenue Expenditure | 90135.76 | 10296.17 | 116090.69 | 132794.47 | 152317.18 | 178698.76 | 196127.27 |
| Revenue Expenditure on Social Sector* | 2740.47 (3.04) | 3027.38 (2.94) | 3329.68 (2.87) | 3749.67 (2.82) | 4498.27 (2.95) | 5227.78 (2.93) | 5906.18 (3.01) |
| Revenue Expenditure on Medical, Public Health and Family Welfare** | 347.84 (12.69) | 397.20 (13.12) | 450.25 (13.52) | 559.03 (14.91) | 646.95 (15.45) | 790.45 (15.12) | 896.17 (15.38) |
| Revenue Expenditure on Public Health** | 164.23 (47.21) | 165.19 (41.58) | 179.41 (39.41) | 291.82 (52.20) | 346@ (49.62) | 431.78 (54.62) | 477.57 (52.59) |

Figures in brackets indicate percentage to total revenue expenditure of the union government;
** Figures in brackets indicate percentage to total revenue expenditure on Medical, Public Health.
** Figures in brackets indicate percentage of percentage expenditure on Public Health.
@ Revised Estimates; AC: Accounts.
Source: Union budget for respective years.

Table 6.6. Rates of Growth in Real Per Capita Government Expenditure on Medical & Public Health in Indian States, 1974-75 to 1990-91

| States | Revenue Expenditure | | | Capital Expenditure | | | Total Expenditure | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 74-75 to 90-91 | 74-75 to 84-85 | 85-86 to 90-91 | 74-75 to 90-91 | 74-75 to 84-85 | 85-86 to 90-91 | 74-75 to 90-91 | 74-75 to 84-85 | 85-86 to 90-91 |
| | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
| A.P. | 5.73 | 7.76 | -0.40 | -10.11 | -1.53 | -19.23 | 5.05 | 7.21 | -0.83 |
| Assam | 8.26 | 7.63 | 6.31 | 7.41 | 7.49 | 1.27 | 8.19 | 7.62 | 5.65 |
| Bihar | 6.36 | 6.62 | 4.38 | 5.47 | 15.95 | 18.30 | 6.17 | 8.29 | -0.02 |
| Gujrat | 4.43 | 6.88 | -0.45 | 4.97 | 9.99 | -7.98 | 5.35 | 7.30 | -1.44 |
| Haryana | 5.61 | 10.87 | -4.21 | -2.08 | 4.71 | -8.78 | 5.06 | 10.22 | -4.39 |
| Karnataka | 5.00 | 4.51 | -1.67 | 6.16 | 1.49 | -22.39 | 5.04 | 4.41 | -2.61 |
| Kerala | 4.36 | 2.18 | 7.62 | 12.65 | | -32.94 | 3.99 | 5.26 | 2.64 |
| M.P. | 6.58 | 8.71 | -0.03 | 3.47 | 1.63 | -12.26 | 6.46 | 8.44 | -0.43 |
| Maharashtra | 5.52 | 8.30 | -3.59 | -2.49 | -4.72 | 3.18 | 5.02 | 7.46 | -3.38 |
| Orissa | 5.01 | 9.06 | -10.8 | 2.68 | 9.14 | -0.20 | 4.90 | 9.05 | -8.87 |
| Punjab | 5.14 | 5.08 | 3.68 | 0.42 | 10.04 | -20.70 | 4.97 | 5.37 | 2.77 |
| Rajasthan | 5.05 | 5.10 | 3.90 | 11.24 | 21.19 | -4.95 | 6.46 | 8.91 | 1.38 |
| Tamil Nadu | 6.04 | 8.36 | 4.50 | 3.75 | 9.51 | -2.73 | 6.16 | 9.53 | 1.63 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 7.50 | 9.66 | 5.75 | 11.66 | 21.16 | -5.21 | 7.69 | 10.26 | 5.15 |
| West Bengal | 3.43 | 5.58 | 3.15 | 0.57 | -4.72 | -18.64 | 3.26 | 4.97 | 3.83 |

Source: Budget document of respective state governments. Quoted in Prabhu, *op.cit.*, p.123.

Table 6.7. Infant Mortality Rates, State Wise, India, 1997.

| | Major States/ UTs | Rural | Urban | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| States | Andhra Pradesh | 70 | 37 | 63 |
| | Assam | 79 | 37 | 76 |
| | Bihar | 73 | 53 | 71 |
| | Gujrat | 69 | 46 | 62 |
| | Haryana | 70 | 59 | 68 |
| | Karnataka | 63 | 24 | 53 |
| | Kerala | 11 | 15 | 12 |
| | Madhya Pradesh | 99 | 57 | 94 |
| | Maharashtra | 56 | 31 | 47 |
| | Orissa | 100 | 65 | 96 |
| | Punjab | 54 | 38 | 51 |
| | Rajasthan | 89 | 61 | 85 |
| | Tamil Nadu | 58 | 40 | 53 |
| | Uttar Pradesh | 89 | 66 | 85 |
| | West Bengal | 58 | 43 | 55 |
| | Arunachal Pradesh | 49 | 17 | 47 |
| | Goa | 23 | 14 | 19 |
| | Himachal Pradesh | 64 | 38 | 63 |
| | Manipur | 21 | 28 | 30 |
| | Meghalaya | 56 | 52 | 54 |
| | Mirzoram | 22 | 15 | 19 |
| | Nagaland | NA | 16 | NA |
| | Sikkim | 51 | 41 | 51 |
| | Tripura | 53 | 39 | 51 |
| UTs | A & N Islands | 39 | 16 | 33 |
| | Chandigarh | 46 | 14 | 40 |
| | D & N Haveli | 67 | 7 | 63 |
| | Daman & Diu | 41 | 35 | 38 |
| | Delhi | 34 | 35 | 35 |
| | Lakshadweep | 22 | 49 | 36 |
| | Pondicherry | 30 | 16 | 22 |
| All India* | | 77 | 45 | 71 |

* Excludes Jammu & Kashmir due to part receipt of returns.
NA Not Available
Infant mortality Rate for smaller states are for the period 1995-97, except for Mizoram which relates to 1996-97.
Source: Office of the Register General India: Sample Registration System. Quoted in *Selected Socio-Economic Statistics, India, 1998.*

# Chapter 7

## Literacy & Education

*Education is not just an 'absolute value'; it has enormous 'functional value' as well. It builds up, enriches and empowers the individual at the level of the self and as a member of the society and the democratic order. Education, and, particularly, mass literacy, are key factors in the development process.*[1]

In India, there has always been a keen appreciation of the importance of education, with the high priority it was accorded by the leaders of the Freedom Movement very much in evidence in the country's Constitution. Article 45 of the Directive Principle of State Policy says: `The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years'. Further along the road, in a public interest litigation in 1993 (Unnikrishnan vs. the State of Andhra Pradesh), the Supreme Court ruled that "the right to education was a derived fundamental right flowing from the citizen's fundamental right to live".[2] Following this, the Saikia Committee was constituted to consider whether education should explicitly feature as a fundamental right. The recommendations of the committee formed the basis of the Constitution (83rd Amendment) Bill of 1997, the purpose of which was to make education up to the age of fourteen a right that is both fundamental and justiciable.[3]

Meanwhile, the 42nd Amendment had shifted education to the Concurrent list, thus formalising the increasing role of the Centre. The 73rd and the 74th Amendments, which created a framework for the States to endow *panchayats* `..with such powers and authorities as may be necessary to enable them function as institutions of self-government',[4] ushered in yet another change in the constitutional scheme of things. In the changed policy environment, "education including primary and secondary schools" were cited in the Eleventh Schedule, in which are listed the areas in relation to which the States could devolve powers to the *panchayats* so as to enable them, in their functioning as local self government bodies, to conceive and implement programmes for economic development and social justice. On this bold new step, however, there are indications of a slip between the cup and the lip. Although most of the subjects of the Eleventh Schedule have been transferred to

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1 Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunities*, Oxford University Press, 1995; Dreze and Sen, *Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives*, Helsinki, WIDER, 1996.

2 Tapas Majumdar, `Education: Uneven Progress, Difficult Choices, in Hiranmay Karlekar, ed. *Independent India: The First Fifty Years*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. p. 305.

3 Ibid. p. 306.

4 Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, The Constitution Seventy-Third Amendment Act 1992 on the Panchayats, pg. 5.

the *panchayats* in the conformity act of the States,[5] the unwillingness of Stare politicians to part with powers, the bureaucracy's preference for the `distant control mechanism' of the State capitals, low levels of political consciousness in parts of the country, and the postponement of *panchayat* elections on one pretext or another continue to be major bottlenecks.[6] Some States have achieved more progress than others, however, with West Bengal, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh in the forefront in terms of the political will to implement *panchayati raj*,[7] Kerala's experience of *Panchayati Level Planning* having attracted wide attention.[8]

# The Right to Education

As with all other obligations under the Directive Principles of State Policy, article 45, which stipulates that `the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years', is also on a best endeavour basis. Ten years after the commencement of the Constitution i.e. in 1960, the State was nowhere near achieving the goal articulated in Article 45. In spite of the impressive progress made during the last decade or so, even now, this goal continues to elude the nation, notwithstanding judicial pronouncements in its favour. In the Mohini Jain Vs the State of Karnataka case of 1992 and in the Unnikrishnan Vs the State of Andhra Pradesh case in 1993, the Supreme Court's verdict was that the right to education was a derived fundamental right flowing from the citizens' fundamental right to life; the Supreme Court has also given a number of other verdicts widening the scope of the right to life to include not just animal existence but also right to livelihood; and its interpretation of Article 19 asserts that the freedom of speech and expression is difficult to be exercised without education. These judicial interpretations have been in tune with the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. India is a party to both of these instruments.

It took the Central Government five years after the Supreme Court's verdict expanding Article 21 to include right to education as a fundamental right, to introduce a Bill in the Rajya Sabha for amending Article 21. This Bill (the 83rd Constitutional Amendment Bill) was introduced in the Rajya Sabha by the United Front Government in 1997, but remained struck up there until four years later, the

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5 George Mathew, `Panchayati Raj Structure and its Linkage to Development', in Padip Chaturvedi, ed. Food Security and Panchayati Raj, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1997, pg. 23

6 George Mathew, `*Panchayati Raj* Structure and its Linkage to Development', in Pradip Chaturvedi ed. *Food Security and Panchayati Raj*. Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi. 1997; George Mathew, `*Panchayat* Elections: a Dismal Record', *Economic & Political Weekly*, January 20, 2001, XXXVI (3), pp. 183-184.

7 Ibid. pg. 21.

8 George Mathew, `Restructuring the Polity with *Panchayati Raj* as a Cutting Edge: The Background, the Issues, and the Ground Realities. *Social Change*. 28 (1): March 1998.

National Democratic Alliance Government decided to revive it as the 93rd Constitutional Amendment Bill. The Lok Sabha passed this Bill towards the end of 2001 and the Rajya Sabha in early May 2002.

Thus right to education has now become a fundamental right. Now every citizen is vested with the right to approach the Apex Court to get compliance with this right enforced, in case the State fails to provide the necessary infrastructure, facilities and services. The main provision of this Amendment is to insert an Article 21-A in the Constitution of India which stipulates that "the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine". Article 45 of the Constitution has been amended to read "the State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years". Finally, a clause has been added to Article 51-A of the Constitution on Fundamental Duties stating that it shall be the duty of "a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to the child or as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years".

The version of the Bill introduced in 1997 had been criticised by experts, civil society organisations and NGOs on the following grounds:-

a. It did not cover children up to the age of six in spite of the provision of Article 45 that free and compulsory education shall be provided to "all children until they complete the age of fourteen years". Until a sound foundation is laid by providing necessary facilities and services for the education of children between the age group 0 to 6, the provision of free and compulsory education to children in the age group six to fourteen will suffer from fundamental weaknesses and limitations.

b. The term "free" in the Amendment should be defined to include not only free tuition fee but also the provision, free of cost, of one meal, books, notebooks, slates, uniforms, and medical & transport services.

c. The addition to Article 51(K) relating to the parents' or guardians' duty is likely to be misabused. Parents and guardians may be penalised for not sending their children to school, which may be due to factors beyond their control. This may relieve the State of its obligation to provide opportunities for education and put the onus on parents.

d. The Article should provide for not only free and compulsory education but also quality education.

e. The Government should work out the financial implications of the Amendment and indicate how the additional resources are going to be mobilised.

The Bill as passed tries to take care of the criticism regarding the coverage of children in the age group 0-6 by amending Article 45 of the Constitution. But this is not adequate because, not being a part of Fundamental Rights, it is not

justicable. Thus free and compulsory education for children in the age group of 0-6 will remain on a best endeavour basis.

The Government has clarified that even though the Constitutional Amendment makes it a Fundamental Duty of every parent/guardian to send his child/ward to school, there is no provision in it for punishment in case he or she is unable to do so. The Government has indicated that it will try to facilitate the enforcement of this provision not through punishment but by the creation of new school facilities, filling up gaps and improving the quality of education. Moreover, the community will be entrusted with the task of enforcing the right to education and parents and other members of the community will be mobilised for this purpose.

Article 21-A makes it obligatory for the Government to enact a Central legislation to give effect to the Constitutional Amendment. At the time the Amendment Bill was passed, the Government promised that a Central legislation would be introduced spelling out the parameters of what is to be provided by the State for implementing the Amendment. The parameters will include teacher/pupil ratio, number of rooms, distance of travel from schools, quality of education etc. Moreover, the legislation will also create a mechanism by which a citizen who is aggrieved that the right to education has not been fulfilled, should be able to get relief at district and sub-district levels rather than filing Writ Petitions in the High Courts and the Supreme Court. This Central legislation was expected to be introduced and adopted by the Parliament at its monsoon session. Unfortunately the monsoon session has ended and the Bill is yet to be introduced.

The Government had earlier set up an expert committee to calculate the financial implications of the Amendment. According to its calculation, the financial implication is expected to be Rs.9800 crores by way of additional resources every year or 0.5 % of GDP for 10 years which is the time frame envisaged by the Government. The increase in the provision for elementary education in the last budget has not been at all commensurate with this requirement of additional resources.

The Government has in the meantime launched a programme called Sarva *Shiksha Abhiyan* to ensure that every child is provided free elementary education. The *abhiyan* (campaign) aims at universal enrolment by the year 2003, universal 5 years of primary schooling by 2007, and 8 years of elementary schooling by 2010. The *Sarve Shiksha Abhiyan* is being implemented in a Mission mode. The National Mission is headed by the Prime Minister of India and includes representatives of political parties, NGOs, academicians, teachers etc. Similarly, at the State level the State Missions are being headed by the State Chief Ministers. The SSA specifically targets the provision of quality education for all. It also provides for intensive teachers training and academic resource support in the form of Bloc Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres, Teachers Grants and School Grants. The Government has calculated that under the SSA, the Government of India will spend about Rs.63000 crores over the next ten years. Another Rs.7000 crores is expected to be spent through the streamlining of various programmes. The State Governments will provide additional resources amounting to Rs.30, 000 crores as their share of the SSA. An amount of Rs.25000

crores is expected to come from the private sector and Rs.5000 crores from community sources.

# Schools & Schooling - Ground Realities

## A. *Evidence of Micro Surveys*

Based on surveys of 95 villages spread out over nine States, Vaidyanathan and Gopinath Nair sum up the findings reported by the authors concerned on a range of policy issues. These are briefly listed below. [9]

☑ Supply related factors – accessibility, cost, etc. play an important role.

☑ Educated parents are more likely to send their children to schools; hence there is a need for more extensive and effective adult education programmes.

☑ Mass literacy campaigns like *Bharat Jnan Vigyan Jatha*, the Total Literacy Programme and the *Lok Jumbish-Shiksha Karmi* programme in Rajasthan do make a difference by instilling awareness and interest. *Social* movements, however, are far more potent, and there is a need to better understand the factors that underlie them.

☑ Economic factors are important. Even in tuition free government schools, private costs are sizeable. Not only the provision of uniforms etc., the opportunity costs in terms of children's contribution to the household are important, hence, the need for development schemes that reduce these.

☑ Social disabilities of caste and religion need to be countered. In this context, there is a need for public initiatives.

☑ While special initiatives for disadvantaged social groups are called for, there is also a case for the improvement of overall provisioning.

☑ Pupil-teacher ratios should be reasonable and teachers not overloaded with non-teaching responsibilities.

☑ Teachers should have the requisite competence and should conduct classes regularly.

☑ Interventions should be tailored to the great diversity prevailing on the ground.

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9 Vaidyanathan and P.R. Gopinath Nair. 2001. `Introduction', in A.Vaidyanathan and Gopinath Nair eds. Elementary Education in Rural India - A Grassroots View : Strategies for Human Development in India – Volume 2. pp. 40-47.

- ☑ Greater powers to local bodies in the educational sphere, and greater involvement of the local community in monitoring the functioning of schools.

- ☑ Disciplinary powers should be vested in a body consisting of concerned government officials, eminent local citizens and teacher's representatives.

## B. *The Public Report on Basic Education in India by the PROBE Team*

The PROBE Report, which came out in October 1998, is based on a detailed field survey carried out from September to December 1996, covering all elementary schooling facilities (defined as first eight years of schooling) in a sample of 1374 households in 234 randomly selected villages of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. These States account for 40 % of India's population, and more than half of all out-of-school children. Since Himachal Pradesh has been taken as a contrast to the situation in the other four States, survey data apply to these four States i.e., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. These four States are referred to in the Report as PROBE States. The data pertain to the primary stage (i.e. class 1 to 5) of elementary education. The following are the main findings of the Report:

a. *Demand for Education*: There is an overwhelming popular demand for elementary education of decent quality. The proportion of parents who indicated that it is important for a boy to be educated was as high as 98%. In the case of girls, the figure was 89%. One other indication of the high demand for education was that the proportion of children who have never been enrolled in a school is declining quite rapidly. It declined from 50 % in 1986 (NSS data) to 20 % in 1996 (PROBE data). However, high parental motivation for education is often combined with open contempt for the schooling system.

b. *Poor parents equally concerned about quality of education*: Poor parents are concerned about the quality of education and what is judged to constitute quality of education does not vary fundamentally between different social groups.

c. *General picture:* The general picture of the schooling system is characterised by depleted infrastructure, demotivated teachers, paralysing curriculum and irresponsible management.

d. *Poor infrastructure for education*: Schooling infrastructures have significantly improved during the last ten years. They, however, remain highly inadequate. School facilities are minimal – classrooms are over-crowded, school buildings are falling apart, and teaching aids are a rare sight.

e. *Inside the classroom:* Children are burdened with an over-loaded curriculum, unfriendly textbooks, oppressive teaching methods and exacting examinations.

f. *Teaching & Teachers.*

f.1. *Skill Levels.* Most teachers at the primary stage have at least completed secondary schooling. About two-thirds received some pre-service training. Among the younger teachers, the level of general educational qualification is higher but the proportion of those who have received pre-service training is lower. Teachers' skills are vastly unutilised. There is little evidence of in-service training having a practical impact on classroom processes.

f.2. *Teaching Environment.* Teachers feel trapped in a hostile work environment and lack of respect by the local community. Most teachers convey a deep lack of commitment to the promotion of education in the local community. Some of them come with good initial motivations but they lose it over time. The report says: "Indeed, among recently appointed teachers we often met people with genuine enthusiasm. The honeymoon, however, is short lived, as the morale of younger teachers is battered day after day". The main concerns of the teachers were: poor infrastructure facilities; parents' apathy towards their children's education; paralysing curriculum; unwanted postings; distracting non-teaching duties; excessive paper work; and unsupportive management.

f.3. *Accountability.* Apart from improving teaching environment, the other challenge is how to ensure teachers accountability.

f.3.1. One of the means for doing so is to get the village community interested in the schooling of the children. This raises the question of teacher-parent relations. The most common pattern was one of scant interaction between parents and teachers. The two formal institutions of such interaction are Parents-Teachers Associations (PTAs) and Village Education Committees (VECs). These institutions were quite dormant. Less than one-fifth of the schools surveyed had a PTA and even the PTAs that did exist met only once or twice a year for the sake of formality. VECs were doing only a little better. By and large, they seemed to be token institutions with neither teachers nor parents expecting much from them.

f.3.2. The *panchayat* supervision of local teachers may have some potential as an accountability mechanism. However, there seems to be a real danger of abuse by despotic *sarpanchs*. Thus lack of active parent-teacher interaction is a serious shortcoming of the schooling system as it exists today. In considering measures for improvement, it is important to take a broad view of the potential tool of parent-teacher interaction. One should not rely only on

formal institutions such as VECs and PTAs but should also look for outside channels of parents-teachers interaction.

f.4. *Parents' frustration*: Parents, themselves illiterate in many cases, are powerless. Hence nothing improves. Lacking faith in the system, parents are half-hearted in their efforts to send their children to school. This further demotivates the teachers. Everyone's hopelessness feeds on every one else's. The children are the victims.

f.5. *Increase in the number of primary schools:* The number of primary schools has tripled since Independence. Most rural households are now at a convenient distance from a primary school. In 1993, 94 % of the rural population lived within one kilometer of a primary school. However, it is little use living within one kilometer of a primary school if the school is already over-crowded, or if it has a single teacher, or if the school is deprived of basic facilities such as a blackboard. Moreover, nearly one-third of the PROBE survey villages did not have a middle school.

f.6. *Is education really free?* The cash cost of education plays a major role in discouraging poor families in sending children to schools, especially when the quality of schooling is low. North Indian parents spend about Rs.318 per year on an average to send a child to a government primary school. Assuming that they have a family of three children, this is a major financial burden. In a middle class family, sending young children to school on a regular basis is a relatively simple affair. In poor rural families, sending children to school is an exacting struggle.

f.7. *The issue of child labour is exaggerated:* Contrary to the popular belief mainly engendered by the propaganda of the protectionist lobbies in developed countries, only a small minority of Indian children are full-time labourers. The vast majority of them work as family labourers at home or in the fields, and not as wage labourers.

f.8. *School meals:* There is a lot of merit in schemes for providing school meals. They promote school attendance by providing incentives not only to parents but also to the children. They improve the nutrition level of the children, and facilitate socialisation - sitting together and sharing a meal helps to erode the barriers of class and caste. None of the PROBE States have actually introduced school meals. Instead, they run the scheme of "dry rations" which defeats much of the purpose of the school meals programme. It rewards enrolment rather than attendance. Moreover, in some PROBE areas, particularly in large parts of Bihar, no food was released in 1996 even in the form of "dry rations".

f.9. *Private schooling:* Among the PROBE sample households, 18 % of school-going children were enrolled in private schools. The figure was as high as 36 % in Uttar Pradesh. Private schools have emerged

mainly because of two factors: (i) the breakdown of government schools, and (ii) parental ability to pay.

f.9.1. It would be a mistake to think that private schooling is restricted to privileged families. Even among poor families and disadvantaged communities, one finds parents who make great sacrifices to send some or all of their children to a private school. This is another source of evidence for their high motivation to educate their children.

f.9.2. The following are some of the positive features of the private schools:

- f.9.2.1. There is a high level of class room activity
- f.9.2.2. Attendance rates are higher. On an average, 84 % of the children enrolled were present at the time of the PROBE survey.
- f.9.2.3. The rapport between parents and teachers is more constructive in private schools than in government schools. There seems to be mutuality in parents-teachers relations.
- f.9.2.4. There is better utilisation of facilities, greater attention to children, and greater responsiveness of teachers to parental complaints.

f.9.3. Private schools suffer from serious limitations: -

- f.9.3.1. They remain out of reach of the vast majority of poor parents.
- f.9.3.2. Private school teachers tend to belong to the privileged class, with an even lower proportion of women than in government schools. Their formal educational qualifications are similar to those of government teachers, but most of them (80 per cent) are untrained. Private school teachers also receive very low salaries – often one-fifth of the salary of a government teacher with similar teaching responsibilities.
- f.9.3.3. They often take advantage of the vulnerability of parents. They maintain an appearance of efficiency and discipline, but the teaching standard in many of these schools is no better than in government schools. The hollow claim of English instruction made by many private schools is an illustration of this problem.
- f.9.3.4. Private teachers have little reason to promote the personal development of the children, or treat them with sensitivity, or to impart a sense of values.
- f.9.3.5. Finally, the expansion of private schools carries a real danger of further undermining of government schooling system. The parental pressure to improve government schools is likely to diminish because of the declining interest of parents from relatively privileged backgrounds, who can

put their children in private schools. This scenario may lead to a very divisive pattern of schooling opportunities.

g. *Himachal Pradesh: a Contrast*. Himachal Pradesh, to which a separate chapter is devoted in the Report is in the process of making accelerated transition towards universal elementary education. According to the authors of the Report, there is no reason why, given the political will and commitment, this transition cannot be realised on a broader basis for all the North Indian States.

# Those Who Missed the Bus: Adult Education in India - Policy & Perspectives

As country after country emerged from colonial bondage, governments of the newly independent States began the process of nation building through `centrally managed guided democracies'. Ironically, the spread of education that this involved led to critical thinking on the centralised model and provided an impetus to more genuine democratic leanings. With growing democratisation, the spotlight began to play on sustainable development, environmental concerns, and quality of life issues. Governments, for their part, began to realise that the skills and talents of their people were their greatest resource, and that the role of education needed to be thought through afresh. Development henceforth was to be `of' the people, `by' the people and `for' the people. In such a scheme of things, education was to play a critical role - on this, there is a global consensus, demonstrated perhaps most strikingly by the assessment of the progress of nations in terms of the HDI or the Human Development Index, a measure based on the premise that development should give people a decent standard of living, allow them to lead long and healthy lives, and ensure that they are well educated. With the formal system catering only to the privileged few, `continuing education' or `lifelong learning' seeks to compensate by giving those who have missed the bus a second chance.[10] This, then, is the overarching backdrop to `Adult Education'.

## *Antecedents & Roots*

Adult education in India has ancient antecedents - the country's rich oral tradition for the transmission of scriptural knowledge dates back several millennia. With the advent of Buddhism, which did not recognise the caste divisions of Hindu society, education became less exclusive. Especially in the time of Emperor Asoka, the teachings of the Buddha, inscribed on rocks and pillars, were a

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10 Asia Pacific Programme of Education for All, 1997. *Challenges of Education for All in Asia and the Pacific and the APPEAL Response.* Bangkok: UNESCO Principal Office for Asia and the Pacific. pp.2-5.

medium of non-formal education for common people. In the medieval period, the tradition of oral transmission of knowledge, values and culture was sustained by royal patronage to scholars, saints, teachers, artists and artisans. In Akbar's time, handwritten books were read aloud and discussed in Court. Islam was egalitarian, it emphasised the acquisition of knowledge from the cradle to the grave, and education was open to all. Aurangazeb believed in free and compulsory education but could not enforce it throughout this kingdom. [11]

It was only later, in the 19th century, that new winds blew in from the West. The East India Company's main objective was commerce, but its Charter Act of 1698 acknowledged the role of missionaries in spreading education, which they did, not only in an evangelical spirit, but also out of humanitarian considerations. The colonial policy was however not without ambivalence. There was substantial opposition from the British parliament to the education of Indians; it was argued that the American colonies would not have risen in revolt if their leadership had not come from a determined educated class. A temporary ban on the activities of missionaries was followed by the Charter Act of 1813, which gave them the freedom to set up educational institutions (but the promised financial support could not be implemented for want of funds). Lord Grey, the Prime Minister of Britain, saw education as the cornerstone of progress in the colonies; and colonial administrators like Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay (1819-27) took an interest in the promotion of mass education - though that goal, by and large, was thought impracticable. Another important development came in the form of official criticism of the `filtration theory', which envisaged the spread of education as a process by which it was to filter down from the upper classes, who had the leisure and the means to invest in education. It was in this context that, in 1854, the Educational Dispatch suggested measures for promoting mass education. The emphasis was on primary education, and the challenge of adult education was taken up by `missionaries, enlightened Indians and socially committed British officials'. The leaders of the freedom movement, thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, and social reform societies (*Brahmo Samaj*, *Prarthana Samaj*, *Arya Samaj*, and the Indian Social Conference) were key actors, with universities like Madras and Mysore organising extension lectures for the masses along the extra mural lines of British Universities. [12]

In the policy sphere, recognition of the importance of adult education for socio-economic development came from the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928) and the Auxilliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission (1929). `Night schools' modeled after the British Adult Schools and established by Christian missionaries, the key adult education institution in the 19th century, had begun to receive grants in aid from 1921. The main objective was to promote basic literacy, but the course content varied. In Travancore, it covered history, health, hygiene, and first aid. By the 1920s, adult education had come to be challelised also through libraries, community development projects, and awareness programmes organised by social, cultural and political organisations. In addition to official

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11 S.Y. Shah. 1999. *An Encyclopedia of Indian Adult Education*. New Delhi: Adult Literacy Mission. pp. 6, 8.

12 Ibid. pp. 8-12.

initiatives, non governmental organisations like the YMCA and the Servants of India Society played an important role, and professional bodies like the Rural Reconstruction Association of Benares and the Bombay Sanitary Association helped educate the masses on issues of health, society, economy and politics. In the 1930s, adult educators worked to develop primers in local languages. Dr. Frank Laubach, American missionary and author of *India Shall be Literate*, provided professional leadership to Indian adult educators. [13]

By 1919, the nationalist movement and the prospects of *swaraj* had drawn attention to the dangers of an ignorant electorate. Nationalist leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and B.G. Tilak organised night schools, as well as summer schools for literate adults. Political parties organised schools to train young adults for the freedom movement. Following the transfer of power to elected representatives by the 1935 Act, mass literacy programmes were organised in different parts of India – in Bihar, United Provinces, Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Punjab and Assam. The colonial power provided support to adult education, even during the war; it was seen as a way to divert attention from the ongoing freedom struggle, whose leaders saw it as a means to mobilise and motivate the masses. With the resignation of Congress ministries, adult education lost steam and became an official activity of educational departments. In most of the princely States, especially Mewar, it was opposed for fear that it would stimulate subversive activities.

The adult education of the 1920s - an activity in which non-officials were the moving force, was to become an official programme in the 1940s. The success of provincial mass literacy programmes, initiatives of non-officials and social reformers, and the freedom struggle were factors shaping colonial policy in this regard.[14] By 1944, the Sergeant Committee, in its Report of Post War Educational Development in India, advocated a 25-year plan to eradicate illiteracy and make arrangements for adult education. [15]

## *Vocational & `Social' Education*

In 1939, the Adult Education Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education had conceived adult education not just as a process whereby literacy is imparted to adults; it emphasised the need to awaken the interest of the learner, and felt this could be best achieved through vocationalisation. It however saw adult education only as an aspect of social reconstruction; to make adults literate and keep them from lapsing into illiteracy was envisaged as the primary aim. It was after independence, in 1963, that another committee on adult education stressed the need for a `social education' which not only covered basic education, numeracy, and opportunities for further learning through libraries, clubs and the like, but was also linked to such concerns as citizenship, democracy, cultural heritage, health, cooperation, and moral values. In 1952, social education was

13 Ibid. pp. 12-14.
14 Ibid. pg. 15.
15 Ibid. pp. 12, 14.

integrated with the Community Development Programme. Most of the States however failed to fully utilise the sanctioned outlay, mainly due to deficiencies in planning and financial administration. [16]

## *Functional Literacy*

In the 1950s, the adult education programme received financial support from UNESCO and the Ford Foundation, as also training for Indian adult educators from Dr. Frank C. Laubach and Dr. Wealthy Fisher. Dr. Laubach's proposal to the Government of India for an All India adult literacy campaign in 1950s was shelved due to a paucity of funds. The official policy was one of universalisation of elementary education by 1960, which was thought to be a more effective way to tackle the problem of illiteracy. That goal was not achieved. This, together with the limitations of the social education programme were among the factors that paved the way for a policy shift in favour of `functional literacy'. The functional approach was given a stamp of legitimacy in the Report of the Education Commission and in the fourth five-year plan. In 1968-1978, the Farmers Training and Functional Literacy Project (FTFLP) was in place to educate farmers to participate in the `green revolution' - but the beneficiaries were mostly well off farmers. The Functional Literacy for Adult Women programme, introduced in 1975-76 and meant to facilitate women's participation in development, covered 23 States and Union Territories by 1977. In the functional phase of adult education in India, two key adult education institutions were established - the National Board of Adult Education in 1969 and the Directorate of Adult Education in 1971. In 1974, the Central Advisory Board of Education advocated that functional literacy programmes be planned in relation to development schemes. Efforts were made to implement this in the fifth and sixth plans. *Krishi Vigyan Kendras* aimed at providing technical literacy in agriculture and allied fields, while the Shramik *Vidyapeeth* sought to improve the professional competence and enrich the lives of urban workers. Other programmes in place included the *Nehru Yuvak Kendras*, Rural Welfare Extension, and the Family &Child Welfare Programme. [17]

## *National Adult Education Programme*

By the 1970s, Paulo Friere's writings became influential and education came to be seen more as a process of human liberation. The National Adult Education Programme was conceived with equal emphasis on literacy, functionality and social awareness, but the functionality and awareness components got neglected. Still, a high participation of SCs, STs and women was a significant achievement of the NAEP. The NAEP had specified a time frame for the literacy component – 300-500 hours over a 10-month period. Subsequently, in 1980, a review committee recommended a three-year programme of 300-350 hours of basic literacy in the first phase, followed by two reinforcement and vocationalisation phases of 150 and 100 hours.[18] The NAEP Review Committee's proposed three-

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16 Ibid. pp. 16-17, 19, 20-21.
17 Ibid. pp. 22-26.
18 Ibid. pp. 27-28.

year scheme was shelved, and in 1980, the NAEP itself was replaced by the newly constituted National Programme of Adult Education (NPAE). In 1982-83, the government began to fund programmes to supplement the basic literacy component - post literacy (four months) and follow up (one year). This eventually led to the *Jan Shikshan Nilayams,* established all over the country and conceived of as a permanent institution in rural areas to institutionalise post literacy and continuing education. [19]

## *National Literacy Mission*

While the problem of adult illiteracy had been long recognised in official circles, it was formal schooling and its rapid expansion that was emphasised in the country's five-year plans, with such adult literacy initiatives as were undertaken *ad hoc* and limited in reach and scope. This was to change after 1988, with the establishment of the NLM – the National Literacy Mission.[20] Though set up to provide technological and material inputs, the NLM was to soon acquire the coloring of a `societal mission' in a `campaign mode' designed to mobilise large numbers of participants.[21] This followed a campaign for total literacy set in motion in the Ernakulum district of Kerala, one that was marked by a spirit of voluntarism, mobilisation of people from all walks of life, an alliance between the bureaucracy, social activists and voluntary groups, and support of the government at the central, State, district and local levels. Spearheaded by the *Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad*, an NGO working to popularise science, the movement set the stage for the concept of the Total Literacy Campaign, which was then taken up for replication in other parts of the country.[22]

a. *Post Literacy & Continuing Education*

As many learners in the TLCs either did not acquire the recognised levels of proficiency, or, having done so, lapsed into illiteracy, post literacy programmes, it was envisaged by the NLM, would cater to those who had slipped through the net.[23] PL (Post Literacy) was however seen to also have a broader agenda; according to a 1998 NLM document, it was expected to fulfil the goals of `remediation (those not covered by the TLC to be made literate, those below the minimum level of learning to be enabled to achieve it); continuation (stabilisation, reinforcement and upgradation of learning); application (to living and working conditions); communications (group action for participation in the development

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19 C.J. Daswani, nd. `Changing Concepts and Shifting Goals: Post Literacy and Continuing Education in India', in National Institute of Adult Education, *Education for All: Spotlight on Adult Education*. New Delhi: National Institute of Adult Education. pp. 36-37.

20 Anita Dighe, nd. `Social Mobilisation and Total Literacy Campaigns', in National Institute of Adult Education, Education *for All: Spotlight on Adult Education*. New Delhi: National Institute of Adult Education. pp.11-12.

21 Daswani. *op cit.* pg. 41.

22 Anita Dighe. *op cit.* pp.12-14.

23 C.J. Daswani. *op cit. pg. 43*

process), and skill training (life skills, communication skills, vocational skills)'.[24] A 1999 policy document envisaged TLC and PL as `two operational stages in the learning continuum … now under the same scheme'.[25] Meanwhile, in 1995, the JSNs were replaced by CECs (Continuing Education Centres), meant to cater to neo-literates. Its objectives extended to the provision of facilities for retention and reinforcement of literacy skills; application of functional literacy for quality of life improvement; dissemination of information on development programmes for participation; creation of awareness on national concerns; training in vocational skills; provision of a library; and organisation of cultural and recreational activities.[26] In the post literacy and CEC stages, the emphasis is more on skill development and new learning. The principles that underlie it include life long learning to cater to the needs of all sections of society, and learning to be seen as capacity building in the broad sense.[27] The ZSS (*Zilla Saksharata Samiti*), headed by the District Collector with assistance from voluntary agencies, *mahila mandals*, and PRIs, *Nehru Yuvak Kendras* etc., is responsible for implementing the CEC programme and has the freedom to create new grassroots structures to facilitate effective implementation.[28] It is guided by four broad programme areas of APPEAL (Asia Pacific Programme on Education for All): `Equivalency Programmes (EPs) – designed as alternative education programmes equivalent to existing formal, general or vocational education; Income Generating Programmes (IGPs) – designed for acquisition or upgradation of vocational skills for income generating activities; Quality of Life Improvement Programmes – designed to equip the learners with essential knowledge, attitudes, values and skills, both as individuals and members of the community; and Individual Interest Promotion Programmes (IIPP) – designed to provide opportunities for individuals to participate in and learn about their own chosen social, cultural, spiritual, health, physical and artistic interests'. [29]

b. *Changing the World*

The NLMs ideological coloring, according to one of its official publications, draws upon Satyen Maitra's poem, whose words `guide and direct all our endeavours at making our country fully literate'. The poem stresses the need to be literate so as to read simple books, keep accounts, write letters and read newspapers, and asks whether literacy can help one live better, starve less, have a newly thatched roof above one's head, take care of one's health, and be aware of the laws designed to protect and confer benefits.[30] The transformational coloring of the NLM is evident also

24 *Ibid*.. pg. 45.
25 Ibid. pg. 46.
26 *Ibid*. pg. 46-47.
27 National Literacy Mission, *A People's Movement*, pg. 23
28 C.J. Daswani, *op cit*. pg. 47-48.
29 Ibid, pg. 48.
30 National Literacy Mission, 2000. *A People's Movement*. Directorate of Adult Education, Pg. 3.

in its track record. In Pudukkottai, one report has it, literacy was linked up to issue of livelihoods, thus fueling the motivation of learners, and bringing together activists and administrators. It helped women quarry workers petition the Assistant Director (Mines) for permits to sell stones from the quarries in defiance of the contractors. The women learnt to write bills and receipts and manage accounts as well. The adult literacy programme also helped Pudukkottai women enter the gem cutting industry, for which numeracy skills were needed to handle precise machine calibrations. [31] In Nellore, even in the pre-TLC phase itself, the adult literacy programme was embedded in a context of social mobilisation strategies that stressed issues of low wages, untouchability, powerlessness, and social evils like dowry, drinking and wife beating, with literacy seen as a key to understand exploitation.[32] The TLCs were in fact a landmark in a new perception of literacy, as not just about `reading the world' but about transforming it. Mobilisation strategies drew upon the song, dance, and street plays (*kalajathas*) to stress issues of poverty, oppression, caste discrimination, gender inequity and the absence of employment opportunities.[33] In the post literacy phase, *Jana Chetna Kendras* (Centres for People's Awareness), were established. These `village parliaments' were not only venues to discuss the general problems of the village, they were also a place where women could get together and play a key activist role, as the experience of Nellore district has shown. [34]

The post literacy primers contained lessons dealing with day to day problems of the people. One of them, *Seetha Katha,* which tells the tragic story of Seetha, the wife of a liquor addict, turned out to be incendiary. The story, read out in night school to the women of Doobagunta, a small village some 80 kilometres from Nellore town in Andhra Pradesh, struck a chord in the village women, whose earnings from wage labour were spent by their menfolk on toddy and arrack; their household provisions even were sold for liquor, and drunken husbands made their wives miserable. Moved by Seetha's plight, the women mobilised to obstruct the liquor contractor and defy the police and the Collector. The event was reported in a primer *Chaduvu Velugu* (*Light of Knowledge)* as a lesson titled *Advallu Ekamaithe* (*If Women Unite*). Disseminated through the evening classes of the National Literacy Mission, *If Women Unite* had an electrifying effect. Women advised their menfolk not to drink and saw to it that arrack shops were closed, and women squads kept vigil to prevent arrack from entering their villages. The demand for a ban on the manufacture and sale of arrack took root in this fertile soil, and eventually culminated in a ban on the manufacture and sale of all liquor in the State.[35] That the transformational

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31 Nitya Rao. 1993. `Total Literacy Campaigns: a Field Report'. *Economic & Political Weekly*. XXVIII (19): 917.

32 Shatrugna, M. 1998. `Literacy as Liberation: The Nellore Experience', in Shukla, S. and Kaul, R. Eds. *Education, Development & Underdevelopment*. Sage: New Delhi, 250-251.

33 Anita Dighe *op cit*. p. 22.

34 Shatrugna, M. 1998. *op cit*. 251-252.

35 Ibid. pp. 252-258.

aspect the TLCs injected had great potential is attested further by the people's initiatives that emerged in the wake of the TLC's mass mobilisation campaigns; co-operative societies and the *Pani Bachao Andolan* (a `save water campaign') in Maharashtra and the setting up of nursery schools in Assam are cases in point.[36]

c. *Adult Education in Urban Areas*

Adult literacy initiatives have mostly been confined to rural areas and the adult literacy needs of the urban poor relegated to the background. It was in this context that the Urban Literacy Project, a new initiative under the National Literacy Mission, was conceived `… to explore, identify and suggest appropriate strategic interventions, based on documented experiences, authenticated data and research studies, for widening literacy and continuing education in urban areas'. [37] In a workshop to deliberate on Urban Literacy Strategies, it was pointed out that literacy had more economic value in the urban setting, where there was no land to fall back upon, and that the urban cognitive world is large and complex, hence urban adults have special literacy needs - slums, poor civic amenities, urban poverty, the growth of the informal sector, unemployment and underemployment, hopelessness, crime, violence against women, alcohol and drug abuse and AIDS are all part of the urban scene. At the same time, the poor are unaware of government schemes and continue to be exploited, hence there is a need to educate these marginal sections.[38] The workshop also identified the need for networks to coordinate and mobilse activists, NGOs and government bodies to collaborate with the local people in such areas as slum improvement, urban basic services, and poverty alleviation.

d. *Critical Assessment*

d.1. The literacy campaigns were marked by the spirit of voluntarism and decentralised community participation.[39] However, overall, the TLCs got bureaucratised and did not live up to their promise. Districts were classified into A, B, C and D categories, depending on how successful they were in relation to the norm of the total literacy, which led to falsification of data and eroded the credibility of the Total Literacy Campaigns.[40] The `total literacy' declaration and standardised tests deflected attention away from social and development issues. Instead, the focus should be on social accountability to plan for the post-literacy phase and facilitate individuals or organisations that have

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36 Anita Dighe, *op cit*. p. 22.

37 Urban Literacy Project, *Towards Urban Literacy Strategies*, pg. 1.

38 *Ibid*. pp. 5-7, 17-19.

39 Denzil Saldana, 1995. `Literacy Campaigns in Maharashtra and Goa: Issues, Trends and Direction'. *Economic & Political Weekly*. XXX (20): 1182, 1191.

40 Anita Dighe, *op cit*., pp. 16-17, 23-24.

played a major role. In particular, uneven outcomes among learners should determine how the post literacy phase is to be organised. [41]

d.2. The literacy campaigns have drawn in women, weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in a big way and have succeeded in penetrating the structures of deprivation, but they have failed to change these in a major way due to the `lack of concurrent processes of organisation of the oppressed'. At best, the ground has been prepared for this to happen. [42]

d.3. The uneven success of the programme suggests an element of *ad hocism*. Thus, in Puddukotai, where the TLC was a huge success due to the initiative of an enthusiastic Collector; block and district level committees emerged to establish participatory structures at the grassroots.[43] Likewise, in Pasumpon, the TLC `concentrated on and developed a network of participatory grassroots village, *panchayat* and district level structures to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the movement'. A significant feature was the *gram panchayat* coordinator, the link between the village centres and the district, who is appointed by the village people.[44] These districts have been cited as `success stories', which suggests that they stand apart, so that the developments here have not occurred uniformly. It appears that, *at the policy level*, there is a recognition that `each district is unique', so that `… the National Literacy Mission has permitted and encouraged great flexibility and innovation in designing and implementation of post literacy campaigns. The concerned *zilla saksharta samiti* is free to create a model that suits the needs of the district and its learners'.[45] However, there does not seem to be a policy thrust to facilitate an identification of potentials of each district so that they are tapped to the full.

d.4. The TLCs were also subject to structural constraints. Authors of one study note that one of their study districts - Birbhum, in the State of West Bengal, where adult education programmes had been in place for at least three years, was a `politically aware' region. Here: `Devolution of power of local self-government has helped bridge the chasm between the people and the administration'.[46] Another analyst argues that regions that had a history of social reform movements,

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41 Denzil Saldana, *op cit*. 1181, 1185.

42 Ibid. pg 1191.

43 Athreya, V. and Chunkath, S. 1996. *Literacy & Empowerment*. Cited in Anita Dighe, nd. `Social Mobilisation and Total Literacy Campaigns', in National Institute of Adult Education, *Education for All: Spotlight on Adult Education*. pg. 19.

44 Nitya Rao. *op cit*. pg 916.

45 National Literacy Mission. *op cit*. pg. 21.

46 Bhaskar Chatterjee & Qutub Khan, 1997, *Impact of Non-Formal Adult Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: a Four Country Synthesised Study*, Bangkok: UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific, pg. 14.

peasant organisations and working class struggles were receptive to the campaign approach of the TLC. In the `Hindi belt', class, caste, gender and semi-feudal relations in agriculture were stumbling blocks. Thus, there is a need to take cognisance of each region and devise a suitable strategy; indiscriminate replication of the TLC model is not feasible.[47]

d.5. When mobilisation *does* take place, the question arises as to how much `space' a government sponsored radical programme can provide. In Nellore, the police cracked down on women's groups in places where the anti arrack agitation was weak. Following this, the post literacy textbook that sparked off the agitation was withdrawn, as were functionaries in the forefront of the agitation. [48] On the heels of the anti arrack movement in Nellore, and the `new euphoria that was engulfing the district', women established about 7000 of their own thrift and savings groups. Loans were taken out for traditional activities like vegetable vending, dairying, and goat and cattle rearing, along with consumption loans to spend on health problems, marriages and the education of children.[49] The savings movement however petered out after the government coopted it into an impersonal banking system.[50] In Pondicherry, a mass awareness campaign which sought to make the poor aware of their rights was seen by the government in power as dangerous. The government did not sanction the post literacy budget; material for 530 post literacy centres could not be procured and committed volunteers were disillusioned.[51] The Chief minister objected to a post literacy primer that asked `Freedom for the country, but why poverty for us?' Officials were transferred and a voluntary agency associated with the post literacy phase delinked from it.[52]

d.6. Political will has wavered and was not uniform, which was one of the hazards of the `ideological' model of the TLC. [53]

d.7. The NLM's 200 hour basic literacy component spread over 6-8 months is questionable. The NAEP Review Committee had found even a 350-hour basic-literacy segment over a ten-month period insufficient. The result is that the programme has only succeeded in creating `fragile literates', who are at risk of lapsing into illiteracy. There is recognition of this by the NLM itself, and has been commented upon by an Expert Group as well. The problem has been aggravated by long time lags between the literacy programme and the 24-month post literacy phase. The coverage of post literacy too, it seems, has been hamstrung. As per the data from districts covered by

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47 Denzil Saldhana. *op cit*. pp. 1189-1190.

48 Anita Dighe. nd. *op cit*. pg. 26; Anita Dighe 1998 *op cit*. pg. 261.

49 Anita Dighe, 1998, *op cit*., pg. 260.

50 Ramachandran, V. 1999. `Adult Education: A Tale of Empowerment Denied', *Economic & Political Weekly*. XXXIV (15): 879.

51 Nitya Rao. *op cit*. 915.

52 Anita Dighe, nd. *op cit*. pp. 27-28.

53 Ibid. pg 29.

the TLC, out of the 448 TLC districts, in only 234 have post literacy programmes been sanctioned.[54]

d.8. The campaign mode, to which the civil servant-driven TLCs were geared, required qualities in the civil servant that his administrative training had not sought to build upon or inculcate. The civil-servant driven model of the TLC needed exceptional individuals to operate it from the top, and was beyond the reach of routineers, howsoever competent.[55] This in fact can be one reason for the uneven success of the programme. Thus, the Bodhan subdivision of Nizamabad district, which did much better than the other sub divisions, was led by a dynamic sub-collector.[56] On the other hand, it has been argued that the literacy campaigns provided on the job training to government officials and brought them closer to the people. They also drew attention to the need for a different sort of administrative ethos in the field of development.[57]

## *Adult Literacy - A Road Map*

To identify agencies that could participate in the adult literacy programme, there is a need to assess the *types* of capabilities such as administrative capacities, political will, the clout of PRIs, and the role of personal factors like the temperament of the civil servant and whether his background equips him to function in a manner that encourages participatory initiatives. In addition to such official *capabilities*, the adult literacy programmes to be set in place need also to be shaped by the *potentials* in the society that lend or do not lend themselves to social mobilisation and people's participation – whether self help groups are operating in the area, how much voluntary effort can be expected, etc. In regions with a high potential for people's participation, the programme can be truly a `people's programme'. Collectors well trained and with an aptitude for a participatory mode of functioning can be posted in such areas, and participatory potentials tapped to the full. In areas where the campaign mode is not likely to be effective, other strategies can be tried out. Last but not the least, an identification of problems and needs should help shape the proposed programmes; to that end, a needs assessment to be carried out.

All these factors taken together should not only determine the character of the adult education programmes to be set up, but can be expected also to facilitate the identification of a nodal agency that is best equipped to coordinate the functions of the different actors. (For example, the more the programme depends on a participatory mode, the more will be the need for a nodal agency that has the expertise to manage it). Structured & unstructured survey instruments may be used, together with participatory methodologies like focus group discussions, depending on what is feasible, to assess potentials, capabilities and opportunity-

54 C.J. Daswani, nd. *op cit*. pp. 43-44.

55 V. Ramachandran. *op cit*. pg. 878.

56 Nitya Rao. *op cit*. pg. 918.

57 Denzil Saldana. *op cit*. pg. 1191.

needs linkages. An assessment of needs and the scope of the existing institutional arrangements to cater to them in the sampled locales can be a point of departure. This should facilitate an identification of gaps, an assessment of how and the extent to which governmental and non-governmental agencies can rise to the occasion, and how literacy and adult education can fit into this scheme of things.

# Education in the Five Year Plans

We now turn to the shape of and the emphases on educational development in the Five-Year Plans.

## *First Plan*

The First Plan allocation for education was Rs.153 crores, representing 7.8% of the total plan outlay, with the following objectives:

- ☑ Reorganisation of the educational system into various branches and stages.
- ☑ Expansion in the various spheres of education, particularly basic and social education.
- ☑ Modification of the form of professional and technical education.
- ☑ Organising the existing secondary and university education so as to make it adaptable and useful for the rural sector expansion of women's education.
- ☑ Making provision for the training of teachers in basic schools.
- ☑ Providing aid through grants to backward States and areas.

The priorities of the First Plan included

- ☑ Expansion of basic/primary education.
- ☑ Consolidation of secondary and university education.
- ☑ Consolidation and development of teachers facilities.
- ☑ Teacher training.
- ☑ Experiment and research.
- ☑ Creation of literature for children.
- ☑ Provision of facilities for social education.
- ☑ Provision of facilities for professional and technical education.

At the time of initiation of the plan, elementary education received considerable importance, and the number of institutions imparting education during the period also registered a stable increase. The coverage of compulsory education, introduced in 396 urban areas before the First Plan, increased to 1082 urban areas at the end of the plan period. The programme of basic education was integrated within the elementary education programme and a steady progress was registered in all the States. After consultation with the States, 37 areas were selected for the intensive education development programme. This was not just confined to the improvement of existing primary schools; it included the establishment of training colleges for graduate and undergraduate basic schoolteachers, as also, community centres and *janata* colleges for training rural

leaders. In the final year of the Plan, the Ministry of Education established the National Institute for Research in Basic Education at Delhi.

Secondary Education too received an impetus. The Secondary Education Commission suggested making secondary education more diversified, with less emphasis on the English language. Training in technical education at the school level in the form of technical schools and agricultural education in rural schools were recommended. Teacher training was facilitated. A Bureau of Textbook Research was set up, along with Bureaus of Educational and Vocational Guidance in the States, and assistance for establishing guidance bureaus was provided.

The University Grants Commission was set up in 1954. While only 4 universities were established in the plan period, the number of colleges went up from 695 to 965. The number of university students increased from 396745 to 720000. The Higher Rural Education Committee of 1955 recommended that rural institutes provide post-basic courses on rural hygiene, agriculture, and rural engineering to students in the post higher-secondary stage. In this plan period also, the Council for Rural Higher Education was constituted and 10 institutes were selected for developing higher education facilities.

In the field of technical education, the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur was established, and 14 technical training institutions were selected for further development. Scholarships and stipends were planned for promoting scientific and technical education and research. About 40 technical and vocational schools were developed in the First Plan period.

Social Education was planned through literacy and community centres, libraries, and *janata* colleges. Towards the end of the Plan period, the National Fundamental Education Centre for Research & Training of higher personnel in the field of social education was set up.

A Centre of Education for Juvenile Delinquents was established at Hazaribagh, Bihar. Schemes for scholarships were provided for the blind, the deaf and the dumb. Voluntary organisations working in the field of social welfare were aided.

Cultural activities were encouraged and promoted through the establishment of institutions like *Sangeet Natak Academy*, *Lalit Kala Akadami*, *Sahitya Adademi*, the National Book Trust, South India Book Trust and the National Gallery for Art.

## *Second Plan*

a. *Elementary & Basic Education.*

Apart from the continuation of the programmes initiated under the First Plan, the Second Plan gave an impetus to the expansion of elementary education. Special attention was paid to the problem of dropouts among

school children, especially girl students. Since co-education was not readily accepted, the Central Advisory Board of Education recommended the shift system in both basic and non-basic schools. It was suggested that shifts be initially introduced in the first two classes only, and that the related issues of reduced school hours, rationalisation of the curriculum and careful planning of work, inside and outside school, be looked into.

With regard to basic education, the government was confronted with administrative problems, as also, teacher's training. Training of administrative personnel and teachers for basic education were prominent in the agenda for education under the Second Plan. The National Institute of Basic Education was expected to give attention to these aspects. Basic Education was to be linked to allied programmes like those in agriculture, village and small industries, co-operation, development and national extension service. To facilitate co-ordination, advisory committees for basic education were to include persons representing different branches of development work.

b. *Secondary Education*

The thrust area with respect to the secondary education was the development of multipurpose schools designed to equip students for an occupation after their secondary schooling. Junior technical schools were expected to provide general and technical education and workshop training for a period of three years to boys of the age-group 14-17 years.

Training of secondary school teachers as also teachers for the vocational courses received special attention. The Ministry of Education envisaged training of degree and diploma teachers for multipurpose and junior technical schools. Apart from the provision of educational and vocational guidance, improvement of schools was undertaken for upgrading high schools into higher secondary schools.

Steps were taken for co-ordination between post-basic and secondary education. At the secondary stage, provision for the study of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking areas, and of other languages in Hindi-speaking areas, was proposed.

c. *University Education*

For improving education at the university and college levels and reducing wastage and stagnation, the UGC initiated measures like the introduction of three-year degree courses, improvements of buildings, laboratories and libraries, stipends for meritorious students, scholarships for research, and increase in salaries of university teachers. Establishment of new universities were to be undertaken as well.

d. *Technical Education*

The over-all policy for technical education was essentially to improve the technological manpower necessary to carry out programmes of development. Research and education in the fields of technology were sought to be provided by the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. A scheme of management education and training, covering Industrial Engineering, Industrial Administration and Business Management, was implemented in seven selected centres. A Board of Management Studies was set up for training in these subjects in association with industry. The upgradation of the existing institutions and the establishment of new ones were an important part of the Plan aimed at increasing both the graduates and diploma holders in technical fields.

e. *Social Education*

Social education was a part of the National Extension and Community Development Programme. The Ministry of Extension proposed the establishment of a Fundamental Education Centre for training social education organisers and for study and research in problems pertaining to social and basic education.

f. *Scholarships*

Scholarships were an important agenda item with a provision of about Rs. 12 crores. These included post-matriculation scholarships, research scholarships, overseas scholarship, and cultural scholarships for foreign students. Scholarships were provided to students from backward communities like SCs & STs and Other Backward Classes.

# Education in the First Decade of Planning (1951-1961)

The emphasis on basic education was reflected in the growth of both junior and senior basic education schools. While the junior basic education schools increased from 16 % to 29 %, senior basic schools increased from 3% to 30%.

Reorganisation of secondary education took place mainly in the form of conversion of high schools into higher secondary schools, and establishment of multi-purpose schools providing a variety of courses, together with the expansion of teaching facilities in both general science and science as an elective subject.

In the first decade of planning, progress was greater in respect of establishment of middle and secondary schools as compared to primary schools. With regard to trained teachers, the decade saw a rise form 59% to 65% of primary school

teachers, an increase from 53 to 65 % of middle school teachers and increase of 59 to 68 % of high school teachers. The number of students at the university level also increased considerably.

Notwithstanding the gains, the All India Education Survey undertaken in 1957-59 revealed important gaps. It revealed that there were no schools in 29% of the villages and about 17% of the rural population was not served by a school. Regional variations in the disaggregated figure make the picture more complicated.

## *Third Plan*

a. *Pre Schooling*

The Third Plan focussed attention on not just primary education, but also, pre-schooling, which, in the First and Second Plans, had been left mainly to voluntary organisations and a number of *balwadis*. The Third Plan provided for setting up six training centres in Uttar Pradesh for *bal sevikas*. The programme of education allowed Rs. 3 crore for child welfare and allied schemes at the Central level and above Rs. 1 crore at the State level.

b. *Elementary Education*

The Plan sought to provide free, universal and compulsory education for children of the age-group 6-11 years. Special attention was to be paid to the provision of educational facilities in areas with scattered habitations, such as hilly tracts. The Plan sought an increase in the school enrolment of children in the 6-14 years age group, and, in particular, an increase in the proportion of girls enrolled.

c. *Basic Education*

The Plan's objectives were to convert about 57,760 schools into basic schools, to remodel all training institutions along basic lines, to establish basic schools in urban areas and to link up basic education with the development activities of each local community.

A common syllabus was planned for all basic and non-basic schools, apart from the introduction of activities like social service, community living, and cultural and recreational programmes. For the purpose of completing the process of orientation, it was suggested that schools be provided simple equipment and teachers trained in basic education be given short orientation courses. The Plan placed an emphasis on trained teachers for basic and other schools, and community effort for the improvement of enrolment.

d. *Secondary Education*

Secondary education was to be reorganised, so that it was able to provide a diversified educational service. Following the Report of the Secondary Education Commission, measures were envisaged to convert high schools into higher secondary schools; develop multipurpose schools with provision of a small number of elective subjects; expand academic courses, improve facilities for the teaching of science; make provision for educational and vocational guidance; improve the examination and the evaluation system; more facilities for vocational education; an increase in facilities for the education of girls and the backward classes; and the encouragement of merit thorough scholarships.

A central organisation was to be responsible for science education to co-ordinate, guide, and direct the entire programme of science teaching. Talent search was proposed to identify promising talent at the secondary stage and provide opportunities for development.

On the basis of the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission, it was proposed to concentrate on strengthening the existing multipurpose schools. An integrated teacher-training programme was to be initiated which would prepare the teachers for training in both practical and scientific subjects. The State bureaus of Educational and Vocational Guidance, established in 12 States, were to be strengthened. The idea was to vitalise the State bureaus so as to ensure a minimum of career information service in as many secondary schools as possible.

## *Fourth Plan*

The approach of the Fourth Plan was more in the nature of correctives to the previous three plans. The primary task before the Fourth Plan was to remove the deficiencies in the existing educational system and link it effectively with the increasing demands of social and economic development.

*a. Elementary Education*

The emphasis at the elementary level was on free and universal primary education, doing away with wastage, and orienting the elementary curriculum towards work and practical outcomes. In order to come to terms with a 60% drop out rate in elementary education, measures such as better organisation of schools, free supply of textbooks, and extension of the mid-day meal programme were initiated. The expanded adult education programme was planned. Rescheduling of school hours to make them more convenient; planning school vacations to coincide with agricultural operations like sowing, harvesting; and modification of curricula to meet local needs were other changes effected for tackling the problem of drop out. Provisions were made for new school buildings,

introduction of two shifts for the first two classes, and maximum utilisation of space by promoting multiple use of school buildings. Enrolment of women students and increasing the number of women teachers were other aspects of the Plan.

b. *Secondary Education*

The provision of vocational education and the strengthening of science teaching received special attention at the secondary stage. The emphasis was on diversification of secondary education, with the inclusion of technical, commercial and agricultural courses. To help improve teacher's knowledge and teaching skills, science teachers were to be encouraged to take correspondence courses and attend summer classes. In States with a good record of progress in education, secondary schools were to be upgraded to higher secondary schools, while, in several other States, high schools were to be upgraded. Multipurpose schools were to be strengthened. Those leaving secondary school were to be trained for productive employment.

c. *University Education*

At the level of university education, the proposal was to limit the enrolment in arts and commerce courses, and expand facilities for science, agriculture, diploma level technical courses, and medical education. Facilities of post-graduate training and research in science subjects were to be improved. While no new universities were planned, the preference was for setting up university centres for post-graduate education and research. Institutes of rural higher education were to be linked to development programmes in rural areas.

d. *Teacher's Education*

The improvement of facilities for the education of teachers was to include whole-time, part-time, correspondence, and short-term courses. The Plan provided for correspondence courses for 1,40,000 elementary teachers and about 17,660 secondary teachers. In universities, State Institutes of Science Education, State Institutes of Education, and Summer Institutes, correspondence courses were to be utilised for improving the teacher's knowledge. Cash awards and special incentives were to be provided to teachers, with a view to the enhancement of their academic and professional qualifications.

e. *Technical Education*

The technical education sector built up in the first three plans suffered from "an overall shortage of 35 percent in teachers, 53 percent in equipment, 51 percent in infrastructure buildings and 55 percent in hostels". The Fourth Plan sought to make up for the deficiencies and consolidate the existing

institutions by providing more facilities. Efforts were to be made to enable exchange of personnel between institutions. Engineers placed in industries were to be encouraged to take up teaching assignments for specific periods. Expansions were to be limited to select existing colleges and institutes. Special attention was paid to engineering courses at the diploma level. Diversification in training facilities was to be provided to middle level technicians. The institutes of management at Calcutta and Ahmedabad were to be expanded.

*f. Social Education*

To cope with the large-scale illiteracy in the country, mass-scale adult literacy movements were to be launched. Adult Education was to serve as a tool for rural development as well. Libraries were to be established in rural areas and large-scale production of books for neo-literates were to be under taken. Adult literacy programmes were to be undertaken on the lines of *Gram Shikshan Mohim* in Maharashtra.

*g. Other Programmes*

g.1. Language institutes were proposed to be set up and universities were to be encouraged to develop departments of modern Indian languages.

g.2. The National Council of Educational Research and Training and the State Governments were to cater to the requirements of good textbooks. A National Book Development Council was proposed to assist the NCERT and the State Governments in textbook production.

g.3. Physical education was to be a part of secondary education. Facilities for sports training were to be provided in the rural areas. The National Institute of Sports and the National College of Physical Education were to be further developed. Programmes under National Fitness Corps were to be extended.

g.4. Social service camps, campus works projects, youth hostels, scouts and guides were to be encouraged.

g.5. During the Fourth Plan the outlay on scholarships was increased to Rs. 54 crores under secondary, university and technical education and another Rs. 15 crore for agricultural and medical education. These scholarships were largely loan scholarships to be paid back after the students completed their studies and started earning. A national autonomous organisation was to be set up for the administration of scholarships.

## *Fifth Plan*

- ☑ The Fifth Plan outlay for education was Rs. 1285 crores, with emphasis on elementary education. Adequate measures were to be taken for improving the rate of enrolment, increasing the number and quality of teaching personnel, and for constructing classrooms, especially in backward areas. Curriculum reorientation, work experience and strengthening the educational institutions for teachers were among other priorities.

- ☑ In secondary education, improvement in the enrolment of students and the vocationalisation of education were the priority areas.

- ☑ University education was to be consolidated and improved. Provisions were to be made for educational facilities for weaker sections and also for the backward areas.

- ☑ Under the National Scholarship Scheme, 3,000 annual awards were to be given in each of the first 2 years of the Plan, and 5000 scholarships provided in 1976-77. 20,000 yearly national loan scholarships were provided for. Also, the number of scholarships for talented children in rural areas was to be increased to about 15,000 per year.

- ☑ Schemes for improving existing programmes of non-formal education were to be undertaken.

- ☑ Spreading the national language, Hindi, across the country, especially in the non-Hindi speaking states was emphasised. Language institutes like the Central Institute of Indian Languages (Mysore), *Kendriya Hindi Sansthan* (Agra), the *Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan* (New Delhi), and the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (Hyderabad) were to be developed further.

- ☑ The National Service Scheme (NSS) was to be expanded and National Service Volunteers Scheme was to be launched on a pilot basis.

- ☑ The Fifth Plan provided for development of three national academies - the *Sahitya Academy*, *Sangeet Natak Academy*, and *Lalit Kala Academy*, for the propagation of culture.

- ☑ Under the 20-Point Programme, three components related directly to education - provision of books and stationary to students at cheaper rates, supply of essential commodities to hostel students at subsidised cost and expansion of the apprenticeship training programme.

## *Sixth Plan*

The Sixth Plan was characterised by an over all concern for the all round development of children, especially those from the underprivileged groups. In keeping with that approach, a preparatory early childhood programme was introduced to serve the requirements of children in the rural and urban slums and cater to the social and educational backward groups. The Plan aimed to have at least one Early Childhood Education Centre in every Community Development Block. The non-formal approach to education was attuned to the perceptions of children on the suitable use of locally available resources of the community and environment. Programmes were to be implemented by the National Council for Educational Research and Training, which was to provide teaching material and teaching aids for teachers

a. *Elementary Education*

Elementary education constituted a part of the Minimum Needs Programme and its universalisation was actively pursued. Programmes of non-formal education oriented towards target groups were organised. While the contents, course duration, place and hours of learning and pattern of instructions of these programmes were decentralised, a basic minimum package of inputs to parallel the formal system of education was identified.

In both the formal and non-formal systems, the emphasis was on the retention of students and the effective delivery of services to recipients. Midday-meals, supply of uniforms and learning material, and compensation to the families of SC girls were additional incentives for parents to send their wards to school. Humanistic values, the capacity for tolerance, promotion of national integration, scientific attitude and temper and the individual's capacity to learn from the surrounding world were built into the curriculum. To achieve the ultimate objective of universalisation programme by 1990, efforts were directed at improvement of the rates of enrolment in the educationally backward states of Assam, Bihar, MP, Rajasthan, UP and West Bengal.

Expansion of non-formal education was to be continued so that 80-lakh children were covered in the Sixth Plan period. With regard to target groups to be provided with universal elementary education, a family approach was sought to be adopted in conjunction with welfare schemes of different sectors and agencies. Remedial coaching programmes were to enable these children overcome their environmental handicap and educational backwardness. It was the specific responsibility of educational administration and planning to see that these groups were drawn into the fold of national schemes at the earliest, through appropriately designed strategies.

b. *Adult Education*

The Sixth Plan laid emphasis on minimum essential education to all citizens irrespective of their age, sex and residence. Education, with the primary emphasis on the spread of literacy and imparting of practical skills was to be supported by post-literacy continuing education through a network of rural libraries as well as instructional programmes and the media. Non-formal education for adults in the productive age group of 15-35 years was given higher priority because of its potential role in the economy. Priority in productive adult education for the weaker sections like women, the SCs and the STs, and the agricultural labourers, was another point of emphasis.

c. *Secondary Education*

While the quality of secondary education was to be strengthened by updated curriculum and better textbooks and instruction material, there were programmes also for the strengthening of science teaching as also the provision of laboratory equipment for both experimentation and demonstration. Supply of science kits to secondary and higher secondary students was part of the programme.

d. *Higher Education*

Improvement of the quality of higher education received special consideration in the Sixth Plan. Courses were to be designed to facilitate employment generation. Infrastructure improvement was to be provided for in universities on a regional basis. The academic community was to be sensitised to the problems of poverty, illiteracy and environmental degradation.

e. *Youth Development*

The Sixth Plan recognised the importance of training youth to tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment. The National Youth Policy sought to provide greater equality of opportunity to the youth, to liberate their talent, and to ensure a higher average level of relevant basic skill and education through work and service. To draw upon their idealism and healthy aspirations and channelise their energies into developmental tasks and projects, institutions like *Nehru Yuvak Kendras* and *Yuvak Mandals* were to be set up.

f. *Technical Education*

The Sixth Plan sought to improve the facilities for technical education, with emphases on

f.1. Consolidation and optimum utilisation of these facilities.

f.2. Identification of critical areas and creation of necessary facilities for education in emerging technologies in the light of future technological manpower requirements.
f.3. Improvement of the quality of technical education at all levels.
f.4. Enhancement of national efforts to develop and apply science and technology as an instrument of the country's socio-economic progress.
f.5. Completion of development projects of earlier plans and upgradation and modernisation of facilities.

## *Seventh Plan*

The Seventh Plan sought to bring about a reorientation in the education system with the following objectives: the achievement of universal elementary education: eradication of illiteracy in the age-group 15-35 years; vocationalisation and skill-training programmes at different levels of education; upgradation of the quality of education; making education useful in the world of work; emphasising science and environment values; making high quality education more readily available at the district level; removal of obsolescence, and modernisation of technical education. For the achievement of these targets, the strategies suggested were decentralised planning and organisational reforms, promotion of non formal and open learning systems, adoption of low-cost alternatives and maximum utilisation of available resources, the forging of links between development agencies and industry, the mobilisation of community resources, and societal involvement.

a. Elementary Education

The main focus was on universalisation of elementary education for the age group 6-14 years by 1990 as a part of the Minimum Needs Programme. A combination of both formal and non-formal methods was to be used, with a special focus on the needs of the girl child and those belonging to the economically and socially weaker sections. Efforts for reducing the number of dropouts were to be continued. Non-formal education was to be expanded with a view to the universalisation of elementary education for those not able to attend full-time school. A target of 25 million children was suggested for the non-formal programme. Non-formal education was to be made flexible and appropriate to the area specific target groups. Education centres, schools and adult education centres were to be linked together and integrated with development programmes.

Efforts were to be made to enhance the quality and efficiency of the education system. Beginning with the design and construction of school buildings, textbook, curriculum, teaching material and teacher's learning material were to be focussed upon. Physical facilities for elementary education were to be built up under the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP).

Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) was developed as a package with nutrition, healthcare and social welfare for increasing the retention level of children in schools, development of the child's personality and inculcation of a healthy attitude among children.

*b. Adult Education*

- b.1. Adult education was to be linked to development projects like the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), with active participation of village *panchayats*, *mahila mandals*, and the community centres.
- b.2. Programmes of *Nehru Yuvak Kendra* (NYS) and National Service Scheme (NSS) were to focus on eradication of illiteracy. Skill based programmes were to be encouraged through the *Shramik Vidyapeeth.*
- b.3. In 1991, a National Institute of Adult Education was set up.
- b.4. Citizenship education was to be an essential part of not just adult education, but of the entire education system.

*c. Secondary Education*

- c.1. Provision was made for funds to facilitate better utilisation of resources in the existing schools.
- c.2. Distance learning techniques and open school systems were to be further promoted.
- c.3. Girls' education was to be made free till the higher secondary stage, and special attention was to be provided to the needs of the backward areas and under-privileged sections of the population.
- c.4. Environment education was to be made a part of science education.
- c.5. Vocalisation of education at the higher secondary stage was to be emphasised.
- c.6. An expert committee was to be set up to suggest ways and means of an expanded programme of vocationalisation to co-ordinate between the education system and the requirements of economic development.

*d. University Education*

- d.1. Emphasis was to be on consolidation and improvements of the standards and reforms in the system, and making higher education more relevant to national needs and economic development.
- d.2. Expansion of university education was to provide larger access to weaker sections and people from backward areas, for which reservations, scholarships and hostel facilities were to be provided.
- d.3. Open universities, correspondence courses and part-time education were to meet social demands and the need for continuing education.
- d.4. The Indira Gandhi National Open University was to not only offer courses but also train personnel and conduct programmes with the help of the electronic media.

d.5. Six education technology centres were to be developed by the UGC to serve as regional centres for the production of software in education technology as also for the training of personnel engaged in running correspondence courses and programmes of distance education.

d.6. In post-graduate education and research, emphasis was to be placed on promoting quality programmes, on inter disciplinary studies, and emerging frontiers.

d.7. Remedial teaching, preparatory training and special coaching for the SC and ST students were to be implemented.

e. *Technical Education* In the sphere of technical education, the main emphases were to be on:

- ☑ Consolidation of infrastructure and facilities already created.
- ☑ Optimum utilisation of the existing facilities with attention to cost-effectiveness.
- ☑ Identification of critical areas with a view to strengthening facilities in the areas where weaknesses exist in the system.
- ☑ Creation of new infrastructure in areas of emerging technology.
- ☑ Improvement of quality and standards of technical education.
- ☑ Modernisation of engineering laboratories and workshops in the technical education institutions.
- ☑ Effective management of the overall system of technical education for an optimum return on investment.
- ☑ Innovative measures to improve existing facilities and provide low-cost alternatives to achieve previous goals and objectives of planning.
- ☑ Institutional linkages between technical education on the one hand and rural development and other development sectors, on the other.

The All India Council for Technical Education recommended the restructuring of polytechnics as well. Special attention was to be paid to emerging technologies and to computerisation. The manpower information system was to be strengthened and integrated with the planning of technical education. Programmes of community polytechnics were to be expanded to cover as many polytechnics as possible. Effective linkages were to be developed between research and industry and development agencies and establishments. Emphasis was to be placed on science education and modernisation of laboratories in Indian Institutes of Technology, Regional Engineering Colleges and the technical education institutes. An International Centre for Science and Technology Education was to operate through a network of existing institutions and serve as a resource centre for co-operative research.

*f. Other Programmes*

Examination reforms was given top priority. The National Book Trust (NBT) was to be involved in the preparation of literature for neo-literates under National Literacy Mission and the preparation of a list of books for the libraries of 5.5 lakh primary schools. In 1988-89, a new scheme was

implemented for the upgradation of the merit of SC/ST students through remedial and special coaching as a part of National Policy on Education.

## *Eighth Plan*

The Eighth Plan focused on the universalisation of elementary education, eradication of illiteracy in the age-group 15-35 years, the strengthening of vocational education, which was to be linked to the emerging needs in the rural and urban areas.

a. *Elementary Education*

- ☑ Early Childhood Education (ECE) was to be expanded by attaching pre-primary classes to selected primary schools.
- ☑ The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) model was to be implemented by *balwadis*, crèches, and *vikas wadis.*
- ☑ Primary schooling was to be made available to children within a distance of 1 kilometre from their places of residence.
- ☑ Innovative schemes like *shiksha karmi* were to be expanded.
- ☑ Importance was to be given to enrolment of girl students in the upper primary stage.
- ☑ Operation Blackboard was to be completed during the Eighth Plan in the primary schools, and also extended to upper primary schools.
- ☑ Expansion of upper-primary schools was to be undertaken and, to facilitate elementary education, the ratio of upper primary to primary schools was to be brought down to 1:3, with the ultimate aim of a ratio of 1:2.
- ☑ To tackle the high dropout rates, a comprehensive package of incentive as support services for girls, SCs, STs and children of the economically weaker sections was to be put in place.
- ☑ A National Evaluation Organisation (NEO) was to be set up to undertake national scale assessment of student learning; annual sample studies were to be undertaken to estimate the completion rates envisaged in NPE; and a comprehensive computerised data base was to be developed at the district level, to help monitor the education system, and improve planning and management at the district level.

b. *Teachers Education*

The National Council for Teacher Education was to lay down the standards for institutions and courses. Schemes like DIETS, STELS and IASES were to be continued to strengthen the institutional information and programmes for teacher education.

c. *Adult Education*

- ☑ A central strategy with a voluntary learning emphasis in certain districts and in backward sections of the populations was stressed. In the first

instance, a few blocks with the potential to achieve success within reasonable time were to be selected for the literacy campaign. The demonstration effect of these programmes, it was hoped, would spill over to the backward blocks where appropriate literacy programmes could then be developed.

- ☑ In consultation with State governments, voluntary agencies were to be developed to work in co-operation with the government.
- ☑ Academic and technical support to the Adult Education Programme was to be provided by the newly set up National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE).
- ☑ Values like secularism, national integration, small family norm, concern for environmental conservation, and cultural appreciation were to be stressed in the adult education programmes.

d. *Secondary Education*

Secondary schools were to be expanded selectively to cater to the needs of girl students, SCs and STs, and rural areas. Quality improvement was to be emphasised. Provisions for re-entry to secondary school after having discontinued was to be looked into. Education at the 10+2 stages was to be made more vocational and work-oriented. The concept of open schools was to expand the reach of education for those who do not have access to regular institutions because of socio-economic and locational constraints. The National Open School was expected to provide programme and resource support to State-level open schools.

e. *Higher Education*

The thrust areas for higher education under the Eighth Plan were:

- ☑ An integrated approach to higher education.
- ☑ Qualitative improvement of institutions and excellence in results.
- ☑ Cost-effective expansion, and higher education to be made financially self-supporting.
- ☑ Making higher education relevant in the changing socio-economic context.
- ☑ Strengthening the management system of the universities.

For the realisation of these goals, a National Council of Higher Education (NCHE) and a National Accreditation Council (NAC) were established. New university centres were to provide facilities in areas like Biotechnology, Atmospheric Sciences, Oceanography, Electronics, and Computers. Improvement in under-graduate courses in science was to be undertaken in a phased manner. Distance Education was expected to take care of adult learners beyond the age-group 17-23 years.

Thrust areas of the Eighth Plan included:

- ☑ Modernisation and upgradation of infrastructural facilities.

- ☑ Quality improvement in technical and management education.
- ☑ Responding to new industrial policy and industry-R&D labs interaction.
- ☑ Resource Mobilisation.

In the Eighth Plan, The Central Government launched a project to enable State governments to upgrade their polytechnics, in quality, capacity, and efficiency over the period 1990-1999. With an outlay of Rs. 1892 crores, the project was to be taken up in two phases: the first phase would cover 296 polytechnics recognised by AICTE in Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Delhi. The Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) and the Institute of Applied Manpower Resources were made responsible for technological standards. Technology development, through innovation, and its subsequent transfer to industry by five IITs, would be the first step towards identification of project mission and creation of appropriate environment. All remaining polytechnics were to be covered under the community polytechnic scheme.

# Education in the Plans: An Overview

After Independence, the major task before the planners was to improve literacy rates, with the primary focus on enrolment expansions, new institutions, more teachers, and manpower for industries. While the policy canvas incorporated elementary, secondary as well as technical education, primary attention was accorded to the programme of universalisation of elementary education. Also, the spread of education among the less developed sectors and backward regions and classes was kept in mind. Production of books, libraries, polytechnics, training materials and similar infrastructure constituted a necessary part of planning. Gradually, social education and inculcation of values also became an integral part of the education programme.

As enrolment rates gradually improved, the perspective of planning changed in the direction of creating a proper atmosphere, for instance, through mid-day meals and child welfare programmes, and the reorienting of education programmes towards rural and community development. Much of adult education programmes were expected to be parent-education. Education and social values were sought to be expanded. Education was to be linked to welfare.

The focus of policy soon shifted to the widespread development of quality in education by betterment of schools and institutional infrastructure, training of teachers, and better textbooks. In the later plans, particularly the Seventh and the Eighth Plans, special attention was paid to the evaluation system in order to make education more efficient.

From secondary education onwards, the plans enabled education to include vocational training as well. Education was increasingly sought to be made relevant to work, to enhance employment opportunities. Even the technical

training imparted was to be increasingly related to industry. Quality in education, along with the necessary focus on vocational training, was expected to solve the twin problems of the need for manpower and of unemployment.

More and more, non-formal schools, part-time education, and long-distance education came to be emphasised.

The policies also focussed on welfare perspective in education As child-development programmes were linked to education, the plans reflected a trend of not just improving the numbers of recipients but also creating conditions so that the numbers could be improved and retained.

Education was widened to include youth affairs, physical education and sports, art and culture. Education policy in India became more comprehensive and tended to be more practical in as much as it addressed the problem of unemployment.

# Achievements & Shortfalls – Evidence of Quantitative Data

## *The All India Picture*

A brief survey of the education scene in India since Independence shows the vast changes that have taken place; the number of primary schools increased from 209,671 in 1950-51 to 565,786 in 1991. In the same period, the number of upper primary schools increased from 13,956 to 152,077. In addition, by 1991, there were 270,000 non-formal education centres. All told, 136 millions were enrolled in these institutions in 1991 as compared to about 23 million in 1951. Most spectacular was the increase at the upper primary stage, where the enrolment jumped from 3 million in 1950-51 to 35 million in 1991-92.

As in the case of schooling, in higher learning too, there have been significant gains. "There were 25 universities and 700 colleges in India in 1947. By the mid-1990s the number of universities including deemed universities and institutions of national importance had risen to 2174 and is still growing. There were 8210 colleges in 1994. The number of students in the higher education sector was a little over 100,000 in 1947. By 1994 the number had grown to over five million or fifty times".[58] Over a period of roughly fifty years, the stock of scientific and technical personnel in the country increased from 1,88,000 in 1950 to 63,13,500 in 1996 (table 7.1). Yet, the numerical growth of institutions, enrolment and the educated person for the country as a whole conceals the inequitable "educational attainment and access … among regions, communities and genders".[59]

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58 Tapas Majumdar, `Education - Uneven Progress, Difficult Choices', in Hiranmay Karlekar, (ed), *Independent India : The First Fifty Years*, Oxford University Press, pp. 293-294.

59 Ibid.

# Table 7.1. Stock of Scientific & Technical Personnel, 1950-1996

| Category of Personnel | Stock at the end of the year ('000) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1950 | 1955 | 1960 | 1965 | 1970 | 1980 | 1983 | 1985 | 1990 | 1991 | 1996 |
| (a)Engineering & technology | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (i) Degree | 21.6 | 37.5 | 62.2 | 106.7 | 185.4 | 221.4 | 303.2 | 372.6 | 454.4 | 546.7 | 726.9 |
| (ii) Diploma | 31.5 | 46.8 | 75.0 | 138.9 | 244.4 | 329.4 | 458.9 | 564.2 | 734.8 | 873.9 | 1196.4 |
| (b) Science | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (i)Post Graduates | 16.0 | 28.0 | 47.7 | 85.7 | 139.2 | 217.5 | 314.7 | 350.3 | 419.7 | 482.0 | 626.1 |
| (ii) Graduates | 60.0 | 102.9 | 165.6 | 261.5 | 420.0 | 750.3 | 1036.4 | 1419.0 | 1684.8 | 2430.3 | 3154.8 |
| (c)Agriculture | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (i)Post graduates | 1.0 | 2.0 | 3.7 | 7.7 | 13.5 | **96.5 | **133.5 | **161.6 | **196.2 | 168.4 | 202.3 |
| (ii) Graduates | 6.9 | 11.5 | 20.2 | 39.4 | 47.2 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 34.4 | 40.2 |
| (d)Medicine | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (i) Degree | 18.0 | 29.0 | 41.6 | 60.6 | 97.8 | 165.4 | 218.6 | 268.2 | 268.2 | 310.3 | 358.4 |
| (ii) Licentiate | 33.0 | 35.0 | 34.0 | 31.1 | 27.0 | *2.2 | .. | *3.7 | *5.5 | 5.7 | 8.4 |
| Total | 188.0 | 292.7 | 450.0 | 731.5 | 1174.5 | 1782.7 | 2465.3 | 3139.6 | 3809.6 | 4851.7 | 6313.5 |

**Note:** It has been estimated that in the year 1980, 1.66 lakhs and in 1985, 2.81 lakhs B.Eds were with Science background. Their Number have been included in the figures of Science Graduates. For 1985 and 1990 S&T personnel stock is at the beginning of the year.

* Represents B.Sc. (Nursing). Particulars regarding number of Licentiates is not available

** Including graduates; Not available

**Source:** Department of Science & Technology

Over a period of 50 years, while progress in literacy was far more dramatic in urban areas, rural areas have been catching up (table 7.2). Both male and female literacy rates have been on the rise since 1951, with male literacy consistently at a far higher level than female literacy, the gender gap has closed dramatically - from 32 per cent of the male literacy rate in 1951 to a high of 71% in 2001 (table 7.3). Data show also that though the gender equity is in evidence at every level - primary, middle, secondary, and in colleges and universities, the gender gaps have been narrowing (table 7.4). Disadvantaged social groups like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been lagging behind but are catching up. In rural areas, where they are mainly concentrated, their literacy rates have been far below that for the general population (table 7.5); however, while there is evidence of inequity, there are distinct indications that it has been consistently decreasing (table 7.6). Persisting inequity is, nonetheless, a cause of concern.

## Table 7.2. Literacy Rate, India, 1951-2001

| Year | Rural | Urban | Total | R-U Disparity Index |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1951 | - | - | 18.3 | - |
| 1961 | 22.5 | 54.4 | 28.3 | 41.36 |
| 1971 | 27.9 | 60.2 | 34.4 | 46.35 |
| 1981 | 36.0 | 67.2 | 43.5 | 53.57 |
| 1991 | 44.7 | 73.1 | 52.2 | 61.15 |
| 2001 | - | - | 65.38 | - |

- Sources: For 1951-1991 - The Times of India, 16 May 1999; for 2001 – Census of India 2001, Series 1 – India, Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2001.
- Note - Literacy rates for 1951, 1961 & 1971 are based on the population aged 5+, while the rates for 1981, 1991 & 2001 are based on the population aged 7+. The Rural-Urban Gap in Literacy has been derived from these figures and is based on the *disparity index* (Gurupada Chakrabarty, Quality of Life of Scheduled Castes and Tribes in Rural India, *Yojana*, June 1999, pg. 37). The Rural-Urban Gap in Literacy is calculated by the formula (Rural Literacy Rate / Male Literacy Rate) * 100.

Table 7.7 shows inter-state disparities in literacy, compiled from the most recent census of 2001. As one analyst points out, there is "a fairly clear cut division into the relatively well performing and the badly performing ones"[12]: Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are in the first category, with Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh falling in the category of below average performance. In recent years, however, there have been some pleasant surprises. Data from the 1997 survey of the National Sample Survey

12 Tapas Majumdar, *op.cit*, p. 298.

Organisation[13] indicate that the not only did the literacy rate jump to 62% in 1997, even the performance of the BIMARU states has been encouraging: "As against the all India improvement of 9.8 percentage points in literacy between 1991 and 1997, Bihar showed an improvement of 10.5, Madhya Pradesh of 11.8, Uttar Pradesh of 14.4 and Rajasthan of 16.5 percentage points". Disparities have been narrowing down not only between socio-economic groups, but also across and within regions.[14] Yet, areas of persistent educational backwardness have been identified, for instance, 17 *talukas* in Maharashtra and 22 in Orissa, with low literacy in 1981 and slow improvement between 1981 and 1991. In selected districts of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, moreover, absolute declines in literacy rates occurred in a sizeable proportion of villages. [15]

## Table 7.3. Literacy Rates & Gender Disparity in Literacy, 1951-2001

| Year | Literacy Rate | | | Gender Disparity Index |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females | |
| 1951 | 18.33 | 27.16 | 8.86 | 32.62 |
| 1961 | 28.30 | 40.40 | 15.35 | 38.00 |
| 1971 | 34.45 | 45.96 | 21.91 | 47.80 |
| 1981 | 43.57 | 56.38 | 29.76 | 52.78 |
| 1991 | 52.21 | 64.13 | 39.29 | 61.27 |
| 2001 | 65.38 | 75.85 | 54.16 | 71.40 |

- Sources: Literacy Rates for 1951-1991 are from Census of India 2001, Series 1 – India, Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2001, Statement 31 – Literacy Rates in India, 1951-2001.
- Note - The Gender Gap in Literacy has been derived from these figures and is based on the *disparity index* (Gurupada Chakrabarty, Quality of Life of Scheduled Castes and Tribes in Rural India, Yojana, June 1999, pg. 37). The Gender Gap in Literacy is calculated by the formula (Female Literacy Rate / Male Literacy Rate) * 100.

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13 The Times of India, 16 May, 1999.

14 A. Vaidyanathan & P.R. Gopinath Nair, op cit. pg. 26.

15 Ibid. pg. 26; Sarthi Acharya, `Access to Primary Education: Rural Maharashtra & Madhya Pradesh', in A.Vaidyanathan & P.R. Gopinath Nair Eds. *Elementary Education in India: A Grassroots View*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp. 49-85; A. Vaidyanathan, `Socio Economic Characterises of Villages in North Arcot', *Review of Development & Change*. July-December 1996; cited in A.Vaidyanathan & P.R. Gopinath Nair, `Introduction', in A.Vaidyanathan & P.R. Gopinath Nair Eds. *Elementary Education in India: A Grassroots View*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp. 49-85.

Table 7.4. Girls per 100 boys Enrolled in Schools and Colleges, 1950-51 – 1995-96.

| Year | Primary (I-V) | Middle (VI-VII) | Secondary (IX-XI) | College & Universities for general education |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1950-51 | 39 | 18 | 16 | 11 |
| 1955-56 | 44 | 25 | 21 | 14 |
| 1960-61 | 48 | 32 | 23 | 21 |
| 1965-66 | 57 | 37 | 30 | 25 |
| 1970-71 | 60 | 41 | 35 | 27 |
| 1975-76 | 62 | 46 | 39 | 27 |
| 1979-80 | 62 | 48 | 41 | 42 |
| 1980-81 | 63 | 49 | 44 | 42 |
| 1981-82 | 63 | 49 | 44 | 42 |
| 1982-83 | 64 | 51 | 41 | 46 |
| 1983-84 | 64 | 51 | 43 | 46 |
| 1984-85 | 65 | 52 | 44 | 49 |
| 1985-86 | 67 | 54 | 44 | 51 |
| 1986-87 | 69 | 54 | 46 | 51 |
| 1987-88 | 69 | 55 | 47 | 46@ |
| 1988-89 | 70 | 55 | 50 | 46@ |
| 1989-90 | 70 | 56 | 50 | 48@ |
| 1990-91 | 71 | 58 | 50 | 50@ |
| 1991-92 | 72 | 62 | 52 | 48@ |
| 1992-93P | 74 | 63 | 53 | 50@ |
| 1993-94P | 75 | 65 | 55 | 50@ |
| 1994-95P | 75 | 64 | 55 | 52@ |
| 1995-96P | 76 | 64 | 57 | 56@ |

P Provisional
@ Excludes professional, technical and special courses
Source: Ministry of Human Resources Development, Department of Education

Table 7.5. Literacy Rates, Total Population, SCs & STs, Rural Areas, India, 1961-1991.

| Population Group | Literacy Rate | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 |
| All | 18.4 | 23.7 | 29.7 | 36.2 |
| SCs | 8.9 | 12.8 | 18.5 | 26.6 |
| STs | 8.2 | 10.7 | 14.9 | 21.8 |

Source: Gurupada Chakrabarty, Quality of Life of Scheduled Castes and Tribes in Rural India, *Yojana*, June 1999, pg. 36.

Table 7.6. Literacy Rates of Groups as a Percentage of the Total Literacy Rate, India, Rural Areas, 1961-1991

| Population Group | Literacy Rate of Group as a % of Total Literacy Rate | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| SCs | 48 | 54 | 62 | 73 |
| STs | 45 | 45 | 50 | 60 |

- Source: Gurupada Chakrabarty, Quality of Life of Scheduled Castes and Tribes in Rural India, *Yojana*, June 1999, pg. 37.
- Note - Provisional population figures for 2001 have been published by the Census of India, but currently, the rural / urban break-ups are not available, hence data for 2001 could not be incorporated in this table.

`Social exclusion' is another criterion around which the States differ vastly. `The subject of a recent book,[16] it is a cumulative term that "links together both material deprivation as well as denial of social rights; it encompasses not only the lack of access to goods and services but also exclusion from social security, from justice, from representation and from citizenship".[17] Values of the Cumulative Index of Educational Deprivation for the States are presented in table 7.7. The detailed disaggregated analysis indicates that such 'exclusions' apply to various groups: "the poor, people in rural areas, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, the Muslims and, almost in every case, women".[18] Micro surveys confirm gender disparities, lower literacy levels of SCs and STs, and show also that disparities are lower when overall literacy rates are higher.[19]

16 Gerry Rogers, Charles Gore and Jose B. Figueiredo, (Eds.), *Social Exclusion: Rhetoric, Reality, Responses* (Geneva, ICO, 1995)

17 Manabi Majumdar, "Exclusion in Education: Indian States in Comparative Perspective", in Harris - White and Subramanian, (Eds.), *Illfare in India*, New Delhi, Sage 1999, p. 267.

18 Manabi Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p. 270.

19 A.Vaidyanathan and P.R. Gopinath Nair, *op cit.* , Pg. 31.

Table 7.7. Literacy Rates for States & UTs Ranked by Total Literacy Rate, India, 2001

| Rank | State / UT | Literacy Rate | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | Male | Female |
| 1 | Kerala | 90.92 | 94.20 | 87.86 |
| 2 | Mizoram | 88.49 | 90.69 | 86.13 |
| 3 | Lakshadweep | 87.52 | 93.15 | 81.56 |
| 4 | Goa | 82.32 | 88.88 | 75.51 |
| 5 | Delhi | 81.82 | 87.37 | 75.00 |
| 6 | Chandigarh | 81.76 | 85.65 | 76.65 |
| 7 | Pondicherry | 81.49 | 88.89 | 74.13 |
| 8 | A&N Islands | 81.18 | 86.07 | 75.29 |
| 9 | Daman & Diu | 81.09 | 88.40 | 70.37 |
| 10 | Maharashtra | 77.27 | 86.27 | 67.51 |
| 11 | Himachal Pradesh | 77.13 | 86.02 | 68.08 |
| 12 | Tripura | 73.66 | 81.47 | 65.41 |
| 13 | Tamil Nadu | 73.47 | 82.33 | 64.55 |
| 14 | Uttaranchal | 72.28 | 84.01 | 60.26 |
| 15 | Gujarat | 69.97 | 80.50 | 58.60 |
| 16 | Punjab | 69.95 | 75.63 | 63.55 |
| 17 | Sikkim | 69.68 | 76.73 | 61.46 |
| 18 | West Bengal | 69.22 | 77.58 | 60.22 |
| 19 | Manipur | 68.87 | 77.87 | 59.70 |
| 20 | Haryana | 68.59 | 79.25 | 56.31 |
| 21 | Nagaland | 67.11 | 71.77 | 61.92 |
| 22 | Karnataka | 67.04 | 76.29 | 57.45 |
| 23 | Chattisgarh | 65.18 | 77.86 | 52.40 |
| 24 | Assam | 64.28 | 71.93 | 56.03 |
| 25 | Madhya Pradesh | 64.11 | 76.80 | 50.28 |
| 26 | Orissa | 63.61 | 75.95 | 50.97 |
| 27 | Meghalaya | 63.31 | 66.14 | 60.41 |
| 28 | Andhra Pradesh | 61.11 | 70.85 | 51.17 |
| 29 | Rajasthan | 61.03 | 76.46 | 44.34 |
| 30 | D & N.H. | 60.03 | 73.32 | 42.99 |
| 31 | Uttar Pradesh | 57.36 | 70.23 | 42.98 |
| 32 | Arunachal Pradesh | 54.74 | 64.07 | 44.24 |
| 33 | J & K | 54.46 | 65.75 | 41.82 |
| 34 | Jharkhand | 54.13 | 67.94 | 39.38 |
| 35 | Bihar | 47.53 | 60.32 | 33.57 |

Sources: Columns 1 –3, Statement 32, Ranking Of States & Union Territories by Literacy Rate & Sex, India, 2001, Census of India 2001, Paper 1 of 2001, Provisional Population Totals, Series 1 – India, pp. 117-121.

- The literacy rates for Himachal Pradesh have been worked out by excluding the entire Kinnaur district, where enumeration could not be conducted in the 2001 census of India due to a natural calamity there.
- The literacy rates for Gujarat have been worked out after excluding Kachchh district; the Morvi, Maliya-Miyana and Wankaner *talukas* of Rajkot district, Jodiya *taluk* of Jamnagar district, where enumeration could not be conducted in the 2001 census of India due to a natural calamity there.

Table 7.8. Education Deprivation Index, Indian States, 1981.

| State | Rural | | | | Urban | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | R | Female | R | Male | R | Female | R |
| A.P | 0.178 | 14 | 0.901 | 10 | 0.38 | 12 | 0.657 | 12 |
| Bihar | 0.677 | 11 | 0.930 | 12 | 0.37 | 11 | 0.667 | 13 |
| Gujarat | 0.590 | 6 | 0.836 | 7 | 0.33 | 5 | 0.564 | 6 |
| Haryana | 0.623 | 9 | 0.907 | 11 | 0.35 | 9 | 0.562 | 9 |
| H.P. | 0.563 | 4 | 0.809 | 2 | 0.28 | 2 | 0.458 | 2 |
| Karnataka | 0.617 | 8 | 0.860 | 8 | 0.35 | 7 | 0.584 | 8 |
| Kerala | 0.337 | 1 | 0.474 | 1 | 0.25 | 1 | 0.380 | 1 |
| M.P. | 0.700 | 13 | 0.939 | 14 | 0.36 | 10 | 0.639 | 10 |
| Maharashtra | 0.541 | 2 | 0.835 | 6 | 0.30 | 3 | 0.522 | 4 |
| Orissa | 0.598 | 7 | 0.870 | 9 | 0.35 | 8 | 0.643 | 11 |
| Punjab | 0.644 | 10 | 0.815 | 3 | 0.40 | 14 | 0.568 | 7 |
| Rajasthan | 0.739 | 15 | 0.962 | 15 | 0.39 | 13 | 0.714 | 15 |
| Tamil Nadu | 0.559 | 3 | 0.825 | 4 | 0.30 | 4 | 0.545 | 5 |
| U.P. | 0.681 | 12 | 0.936 | 13 | 0.44 | 15 | 0.687 | 14 |
| West Bengal | 0.572 | 5 | 0.829 | 5 | 0.33 | 6 | 0.512 | 3 |
| India | 0.630 | | 0.870 | | 0.35 | | 0.584 | |

- Source: Calculated from the Census Data, 1981. Quoted in Manabi Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p. 272.
- Note:
  - `R' stands for `Rank'
  - the higher the index value, the greater is the deprivation and hence the lower the ranking.

# Public Expenditure on Education

The low level of public expenditure on education is another prominent feature of the Indian educational scene; "in a list of 86 countries for which relevant data is available, India ranks only 32$^{nd}$ in terms of public expenditure on education as a proportion of GNP."[20] While expenditure increased from 0.68 percent of GNP in 1950-51 to 3.80 percent in 1995-96 (table 7.9), the figure of 3.80 % is still only a little above half of the 6 % recommended repeatedly by the Education Commission of 1964-66 and the National Policy of Education of 1968, 1986 and 1992.

20 Abusaleh Shariff and P.K. Ghosh, op.cit., p. 1396.

Table 7.9. Public Expenditure on Education as a % of GNP, India, 1950-51 - 1995-96

| Year | % of GNP |
|---|---|
| 1950-51 | 0.68 |
| 1960-61 | 1.58 |
| 1970-71 | 2.26 |
| 1980-81 | 3.00 |
| 1985-86 | 3.60 |
| 1990-91 | 4.10 |
| 1995-96 | 3.80 |

Source: Abusaleh Sharif and P.K. Ghosh, "Indian Education Scene and the Public Gap", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXV, No. 16, 2000.

While the State has had a key role to play in the country's educational achievements, socio-economic factors and public attitudes too are important. These can significantly influence government policy and its implementation and impact.[21] Private initiatives also play a critical role. A survey of 95 villages spread over 9 States showed that the proportion of private unaided schools was as high as 47% in the Rampur district of Uttar Pradesh.[22] Another study too underscores wide private initiatives in schooling in Uttar Pradesh, and notes that in private unaided schools, there is evidence of a genuine commitment to basic education, particularly among disadvantaged groups.[23] Similarly, it was found that in Dumka, a prominently tribal area of Bihar, private schools were mostly run by missionaries.[24] Clearly, the educational gains shown by macro data sources are not all the results of State policy. Still, it is useful to profile achievements and shortfalls so as to take stock and identify issues needing attention.

The expenditure on education has mostly been met by the States; while the share of the Centre has been increasing, it is the States who continue to account for the lion's share of public expenditure on education (table 7.10). The highest growth rate of 15.6 was reported for Rajasthan while Andhra Pradesh recorded a level of 4.9 per cent (table 7.11). (The low figure for Kerala is explained is terms of its "spending substantial amounts on education since the inception of the planning process"). A break-up of expenditure in terms of the three sectors of education, primary, secondary and higher) also shows strong differentials, with Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra spending far more on primary education than the other States (table 7.12).

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21 A.Vaidyanathan and P.R. Gopinath Nair, *op cit.* p 24

22 Ibid, pg. 36.

23 Jean Dreze and Haris Gazdar, `Uttar Pradesh: the Burden of Inertia', in Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, Eds. *Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 72.

24 Ibid. pg. 35.

Table 7.10. Expenditure on Education in India: Shares of Centre and States, 1980-81 - 1995-96.

| Year | Centre | States | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1980.81 | 6.8% | 93.2% | 100 |
| 1985.86 | 7.4% | 92.6% | 100 |
| 1990-91 | 9.6% | 90.4% | 100 |
| 1995-96 | 11.1% | 88.9% | 100 |

Source: Abusaleh Shariff and P.K. Ghosh,"Indian Education Scene and the Public Gap", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXV, No. 16, 2000.

Table 7.11. Public Expenditure on Education and Annual Growth Rates (at Constant Prices 1980-81 = 100)

| State | Growth Rate in Expenditure | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1980-81 to 1985-86 | 1985-86 to 1990-91 | 1990-91 to 1995-96 | 1980-81 to 1995-96 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 10.7 | 2.3 | 0.3 | 4.9 |
| Assam | 10.5 | 4.4 | 11.4 | 12.8 |
| Bihar | 14.8 | 14.2 | -0.3 | 12.8 |
| Gujarat | 14.8 | 6.6 | 5.0 | 12.6 |
| Haryana | 11.7 | 7.6 | 1.2 | 8.8 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 4.4 | 14.3 | 3.4 | 9.6 |
| Karnataka | 8.8 | 9.0 | 5.3 | 10.9 |
| Kerala | 4.4 | 4.6 | 9.3 | 8.0 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 9.7 | 9.7 | 3.5 | 10.6 |
| Maharashtra | 10.6 | 8.7 | 4.0 | 10.9 |
| Orissa | 6.0 | 12.3 | 4.7 | 10.6 |
| Punjab | 6.0 | 8.3 | 0.1 | 5.7 |
| Rajasthan | 11.0 | 11.7 | 7.1 | 15.6 |
| Tamil Nadu | 9.0 | 12.8 | 1.7 | 10.5 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 11.5 | 14.4 | 0.2 | 11.6 |
| West Bengal | 8.4 | 9.5 | 5.9 | 11.4 |
| All States | 9.9 | 9.5 | 3.4 | 10.5 |
| Centre | 12.8 | 19.3 | 7.2 | 22.5 |
| All India (Centre+States+Uts) | 10.2 | 10.2 | 3.4 | 11.1 |

Source: Computed from data in *Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education* (various years). Quoted in Abusaleh Shariff and P.K. Ghosh, op.cit. p. 1399.

Table 7.12. Educational Expenditure as a Per Cent of Revenues, 15 Large Indian States, 1997-98.

| State | Level of Education | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Primary | Secondary | Higher |
| Andhra Pradesh | 10.88 | 7.48 | 2.82 |
| Assam | 14.01 | 6.48 | 2.13 |
| Bihar | 13.61 | 3.84 | 2.00 |
| Gujarat | 21.24 | 6.81 | 1.67 |
| Haryana | 6.01 | 4.34 | 1.72 |
| Karnataka | 16.97 | 8.85 | 2.25 |
| Kerala | 9.30 | 6.05 | 2.31 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 10.20 | 3.39 | 1.87 |
| Maharashtra | 16.70 | 7.95 | 1.75 |
| Orissa | 10.79 | 5.10 | 3.18 |
| Punjab | 4.03 | 7.07 | 1.67 |
| Rajasthan | 18.94 | 7.75 | 1.62 |
| Tamil Nadu | 8.40 | 6.63 | 1.72 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 9.58 | 4.69 | 1.32 |
| West Bengal | 6.44 | 9.61 | 2.49 |

In terms of per pupil expenditure too, there is a wide range of variation; in 1980-81, they ranged from a low of Rs. 220 for Bihar to a high of 522 for Himachal Pradesh, with the growth rate in per pupil expenditure from 1980-81 to 1995-96 fluctuating from 0.3 per cent for Andhra Pradesh and 5.8% for Bihar, to a peak of 6.9% for Kerala.[25] Notwithstanding these disparities, primary education was relatively neglected across States, with per pupil expenditures overwhelmingly weighted in favour of secondary, university, and technical education.[26]

25 Abusaleh Sharifff and P.K. Ghosh,` Indian Education Scene and the Public Gap' Economic & Political Weekly, vol. XXXV, no. 16, pg. 1403

26 Ibid. pg. 1404

# Chapter 8

## Poverty Alleviation

*"`... the relevance of low incomes, meagre possessions and other aspects of what are understandably seen as economic poverty relates ultimately to their role in curtailing capabilities – that is, their role in severely restricting the choice people have to lead valuable and valued lives. Poverty is, thus ultimately a matter of capability deprivation and note has to be taken of that basic connection not just at the conceptual level, but also in economic investigations and in social and political analysis".*[1]

The Constitution emphasises equality as one of its basic principles, and large-scale poverty is clearly at variance with that norm.[2] Fighting poverty was, therefore, a major objective of planning, with the `Poverty Line' conceived as a conceptual and analytical tool.[3] It was in 1962, when the Perspective Planning Division of the Planning Commission targeted a minimum level of living by the end of the Sixth Plan, that the definition of the poverty line was first attempted. `It was suggested that the expenditure needed to obtain 2400 calories per capita per day in the rural areas and 2250 calories per day in the urban areas, plus the extra amount needed to meet other basic requirements – the latter reckoned at 20% of the expenditure on food – defined the threshold, or the poverty line, for the purpose of identification of the poor households'.[4] The norms were however subsequently revised, when the Task Force on Minimum Needs 1979 (Perspective Planning Division) fixed the calorie norms at 2400 and 2100 per capita per day for rural and urban areas respectively. To meet these calorie requirements, per capita monthly consumer expenditures of Rs. 49.09 and Rs. 56.64 in rural and urban areas respectively were thought adequate[5]. With changing price levels, the poverty line, defined in terms of per capita expenditure, has had to be continually updated.

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1 Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

2 Even before Independence, the National Planning Committee of the Indian National Congress, headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, declared that its social objective should be `to ensure an adequate standard of living for the masses, in other words, to get rid of the appalling poverty of the people' (S.Mahendra Dev and Ajit Ranade, `Poverty and Public Policy – a Mixed Record', in Kirit S. Parikh, India Development Report 1997. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1977, pg. 61.

3 V.M. Dandekar and Nilakanta Rath, *Poverty in India*, Indian School of Political Economy, Lonavala, 1971.

4 Mahendra Dev and Ajit Ranade, op.cit. pg 61.

5 Ibid. pp. 61-62.

# Head Counts, Severity Ratios & Absolute Numbers of the Poor

Given the parameters identified by the 1979 Task Force, there have been a number of official as well as non-official estimates of poverty `head counts'.[6] This approach to poverty measurement is based on estimates of consumption expenditure of households carried out by the National Sample Surveys. Apart from the "thin" sample on which such estimates are based,[7] they are found wanting also because of their inability "to capture … variations in … intensity…"[8] In other words, a glaring deficiency of the `head count' approach is that it does not indicate *how far* below the poverty line the poor really are.[9] The challenge of measuring the `depth' or `severity' of poverty has led to measures such as the Poverty Gap Index, the Sen Index and the FTG index.[10] Poverty estimates have also been subject to a critique of a different sort, with the debate over concept, methodology and prescription analysed in terms of `political roots'.[11]

Apart from poverty ratios, the absolute numbers of the poor are also a matter of concern. While the percentage of the poor in the population has decreased to about one half to about one third between 1951 and 1997, the "number of people with real incomes falling below the poverty line has increased from about 160 million in the early 1950s to about 320 million by the mid-1990s".[12] A higher rate of population growth and a tardy economic showing has resulted in this situation of increasing numbers of the poor even when their proportion declines. Population growth has, in fact has been identified as a key element in the fight against poverty; it has been argued that `…except for some of the oil rich countries in the Middle East, no country has succeeded in achieving a high per capita income and low poverty ratio whose population is continuing to grow fast'.[13]

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6 Ibid, pg. 62.

7 Abhijit Sen, "Economic Reforms, Employment and Poverty", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXI, nos.35, 36 and 37, 1996.

8 G.H. Peiris, "Poverty, Development and Inter-Group Conflict in South Asia: Covariance and Causal Connection", *Ethnic Studies Report*, Vol. XVIII, no.1, January 2000, p.2.

9 Still, the `head count ratio' *can* indicate the severity of poverty when, for instance, it is used to compare HCRs based on poverty lines for the `poor' and `ultra poor' (Mahendra Dev and Ajit Ranade, op cit. pg. 62).

10 Ibid. pg. 62.

11 Anup Kumar Sen, "Political Roots of Poverty Studies", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXV, no.3, 2000.

12 G.H. Peiris, *op.cit.*, p.5.

13 Raja J. Chellaiah and R. Sudarshan (eds.), *Income Poverty and Beyond: Human Development in India*, New Delhi, Social Science Press, 1999, p.xiv.

# The Policy Response

After Independence, measures to reduce poverty were undertaken by the governments at the Centre and the States These include measures to prevent concentration of income, programmes under the five-year plans, and targeted programmes like the Integrated Rural Development Programme, National Rural Development Programme (NREP), *Antyodaya* and the *Jawahar Rozgar Yojana*. In all the Plans, particularly since the Fifth, poverty reduction and the provision of basic needs was emphasised. The government's approach has been two pronged – the promotion of economic growth and direct action for poverty alleviation.[14]

## *The Five Year Plans*

a. The First Plan (1951-56) sought to build up from the ravages of colonial exploitation and the partition Independence brought in its wake. Despite the Plan's emphasis on all-round balanced development, agriculture and irrigation was accorded a prioritised sectoral outlay (44.6%). While the industrial sector received lower priority, development of power, rural development through Community Development Projects and social welfare programmes received more attention.

b. The Second Plan (1956-61) aimed at the industrial development of the country. Emphasis was placed on reducing the concentration of wealth and income to benefit the less privileged sections of society.

c. The Third Plan (1961-66) defined its objective in terms of self-sustained growth. It sought self-sufficiency in agriculture, growth of basic industries, maximum utilisation of manpower resources and decentralisation of economic power. While national income grew by 2.6% against the target of 5%, the price index in 1965-66 was 32% higher than that in 1960-61. The Indo-Pakistan War, Sino-Indian conflict, and failures of the monsoon were important factors in the setback.

d. The poor shape of the economy ultimately led to a 'Plan Holiday', which saw Annual Plans in 1966-69. These were meant to continue the unfinished tasks of the Third Plan.

e. In the Fourth Plan (1967-74), `growth with social justice' provided a new orientation to the planning process. The importance of growth in both agricultural and industrial sectors was recognised.

f. The Fifth Plan (1974-79) was formulated in a period when the economy was facing severe inflationary pressures. The Plan attempted to start a separate set of programmes for combating poverty, apart from those that aimed at overall growth and redistribution. These new programmes were aimed at meeting specified needs of the poor, up to a quantified minimum level, uniformly over the country. The aim of the government was to provide the people with an income of RS. 40 per month, which was determined as the `poverty line' at 1972-73 prices. Increase in

14 Mahendra Dev and Ajit Ranade, op cit. pg .61.

employment opportunities, self-sufficiency, policy of minimum wages, removal of regional imbalances, and encouragement to exports received priority attention.

g. The Sixth Plan (1980-85) had the removal of poverty as its foremost objective. Stress was laid on economic growth, equality of income, self-sufficiency in technology, improvement of the pubic distribution system and the betterment of the quality of life of the weaker sections of society. The plan included a number of time-bound minimum needs programmes for the poor, for which the allotment represented a four-fold increase over the corresponding allotment in the Fifth Plan. National Sample Survey reports showed that the percentage of people living below the poverty line declined from 48.3% in 1977-78 to 36.9% in 1984-85.

h. The Seventh Plan (1985-90) prioritised three sectors - food, work and productivity. Poverty remained a priority, with the poverty-ratio expected to decline from 37% to 26% by 1990.

i. The Eighth Plan (1990-95) was not conceived much differently from the previous plans. It aimed for a growth rate of 5.5% to 6.5% (of overall GDP), an agricultural growth rate of 5%, industrial growth rate of 12%, and service sector growth rate of 8% to 10%.

## *Nationalisation of Banks*

The nationalisation of 14 banks in 1969 was a major step - the pre-1969 scenario in the banking sector had shown concentration in urban business, with banks focusing on the financing of large industries and wholesale trade.

The objective of nationalisation was to enable reduction of regional imbalances in banking development and make banks more responsive to national requirements. Banks rapidly increased their network of branches in rural areas. They also initiated changes in their credit policy to prioritise credit flow to the weaker sections, agriculture and small-scale industry.

Growth in rural banking registered an increase, with the expansion of the branch network of commercial banks. Bank offices increased from 8,262 in June 1969 to 34,587 in December 1980, and many of the new offices were in the rural areas. Almost all development blocks of the country were covered by commercial banking, excepting in a few regions like the North-East. The population per branch was reduced from 65,000 in 1969 to 16,000 in December 1980.

The Integrated Rural Scheme or *gramodaya* project of the banks was envisaged for all-round progress in rural areas, and especially, the poorer villages.

The decade of post-nationalisation policy in 1979 saw the percentages of agricultural credit and of agricultural accounts in the public sector banks. at 36% and 37.5% respectively. The main policy of the banks with regard to agricultural financing was the `intensive area approach', in which villages were adopted by their branches on a cluster basis. The purpose of village adoption was to ensure benefits trickled down to the smallest of farmers.

In 1972, under the directives of the Reserve Bank of India, commercial banks increased their lending to priority sectors like small-scale industries and small

business. Banks were encouraged to provide funds for the neglected sectors of the economy, e.g. transport operators and small businesses.

The share of priority credit rose from 14% in 1969 to around 33% in 1980 and still further to 42% in 1988.

## *Differential Interest Rate Scheme*

The Differential Interest Rate (DIR) scheme was introduced by the government in 1972 for providing the weaker sections credit at a concessional rate of 4% interest per annum. In the beginning, the scheme was put into effect only selectively. After 1977, it was expanded and banks were assigned definite targets. When the DIR became a part of the government's 20-point programme, it sought to reinforce its lending to specified categories of the weaker sections. District Credit Plans were drawn up for enabling better credit facilities and to fill up existing credit gaps in the rural and semi-urban areas.

## *20 - Point Programme*

In July 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced the 20-Point Programme for reducing poverty and uplifting the weaker sections of the society. The Programme included policy initiatives like the control of inflation, incentives for production, welfare of the rural population, help to the urban middle classes, and the control of economic and social crime. Other elements of the programme were

- ☑ Improvement of irrigational facilities.
- ☑ Production programmes for rural employment.
- ☑ Distribution of surplus land.
- ☑ Minimum wages to landless labourers.
- ☑ Rehabilitation of bonded labour.
- ☑ Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- ☑ Growth of housing infrastructure.
- ☑ Increase in power production.
- ☑ Family planning.
- ☑ Tree plantation.
- ☑ Extension of primary health facilities.
- ☑ Programmes for welfare of women and children.
- ☑ Increase in primary education.
- ☑ Strengthening of the public distribution system.
- ☑ Simplification of industrial policies.
- ☑ Control of black money.
- ☑ Betterment of drinking water provisions.
- ☑ Development of internal resources.

After change of government at the Centre in January 1982, significant importance was attached to the revised rural development programme, with an emphasis on attacking rural poverty and improvement of the conditions of the SCs and STs. In August 1986, in the light of the Sixth Plan experience, the 20-Point Programme was restructured. The elements of the restructured programme included –

- ☑ Eradication or poverty.
- ☑ Raising of productivity.
- ☑ Reduction of income disparities and along with it, socio-economic disparities, and improvement of the general quality of life.
- ☑ A strategy for rain-fed agriculture.
- ☑ Better use of irrigation water.
- ☑ Enforcement of land reforms.
- ☑ Special programmes for rural labour.
- ☑ Clean drinking water.
- ☑ Health for all.
- ☑ Two-child norm.
- ☑ Expansion of education.
- ☑ Justice for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- ☑ Equality for women.
- ☑ New opportunities for youth.
- ☑ Housing for the people.
- ☑ Improvement of slums.
- ☑ New strategy for forestry.
- ☑ Protection of the environment.
- ☑ Concern for the consumer.
- ☑ Energy for the villages.
- ☑ Responsive administration.

## *Poverty Alleviation Programmes*

a. *SFDA & MFAL*

In the Fourth Plan period (1969-74), to further the objective of self-sufficiency of small and marginal farmers, the Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labour (MFAL) programme and the Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) were established. Under the aegis of these programmes, the productivity of smallholdings was sought to be raised and the condition of landless labourers improved via the generation of employment through subsidiary occupations. . In

drought-prone areas, the Rural Work Programme (RWP) was started to provide employment.

The Fifth Plan (1974-79) merged SFDA and MFAL into a single scheme and provided for its expansion. Also, the RWP was reorganised as Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP).

In 1978-79, all these programmes were replaced by the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), whose purpose was to generate employment and raise the income level of the target groups - small and marginal farmers, share croppers, agricultural labourers, rural artisans, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

b. *IRDP*

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) has been a major instrument of the government for alleviating poverty. The philosophy underlying IRDP is to attack rural poverty by providing the poor with productive assets and skills, so that they are assured of a regular income. At both the conceptual level and in operational terms, the IRDP is meant to be an exercise in micro-level planning, whereby small households are provided with locally available resources, and skills are imparted to beneficiaries. To maximise the impact of the IRDP, the household plan is required to be integrated with the block sectoral resources and spatial plans.

Under the programme, the family is the basic unit of development. Selected families are provided help to rise above the poverty line by taking up self-employment ventures - agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry in the primary sector; weaving and handicrafts in the secondary sector; and service and business activities in the tertiary sector. The IRDP was meant to achieve its objective within a limited time frame. The guidelines suggested that at least 50% of the beneficiaries should be from the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, 40% should be women and 3% from the physically handicapped categories.

The programme was launched by the Centre in March, 1976, in 20 selected districts. It extended to 2300 blocks in 1978-79. By 1980 it was in operation in all the blocks in the country.

Several institutions have carried out studies on the IRDP: Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Institute of Financial Management and Research (IMFR), Madras, the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission (PEO). Several of these studies have raised serious issues in relation to the effect of IRDP on the quality of life of the people below the poverty line. Without questioning the overall utility of the scheme, the criticisms mainly refer to corruption charges, which cause suffering to the poor. Further, since loan recovery from the poor is difficult, bank officials are often reluctant to provide loans. The poor, on the other hand, are not much interested in the programmes out of fear of not being able to repay. Corruption, malpractice, and misuse adversely affect the implementation of the loan programme.

c. *TRYSEM*

*Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment* (TRYSEM) was started in August 1979, as a supporting component of IRDP to develop technical skills in the diverse fields of agriculture, industry, services and business. Eligible youth had to be in the age group of 18-35, and from families below the poverty line. Priority was to be given to youth from the SCs and the STs, ex-servicemen and those who have had school education up to class nine. One-third of the seats in TRYSEM were reserved for women.

d. *NREP*

The *National Rural Development Programme* (NREP), instituted in April 1977 for generating employment opportunities in the rural areas, was originally called the *Food for Work Programme* (FFWP). It created 44 million man-days of employment in 1977-78, 355 million man-days in 1978-79, and 534 million in 1979-80. It drew on 1.28, 12.47, and 23.45 lakh tonnes of food grains respectively in the three years. The work undertaken included flood protection; maintenance of existing roads; provision of new links; improvement of irrigation facilities; construction of *panchayat ghars*, school buildings and medical and health centres; and improvement of sanitation in rural areas.

Due to shortcomings that came to light, the FFWP programme was restructured as the NREP in October, 1980, when it became part of the Sixth Plan (1980-85). This programme is targeted at agricultural labourers who depend on wage employment and virtually have no source of income in the lean period. Important features of the NREP are listed below

- ☑ 10% earmarked allocation for drinking water wells in the *harijan* colonies, including community irrigation schemes in *harijan* areas.
- ☑ 10% allocation to be set aside for social forestry and fuel plantations.
- ☑ Works of durability only to be undertaken.
- ☑ Allocations to be made both at inter-State and inter-district/block levels, the State governments get their share from the central government every quarter.
- ☑ Maintenance of assets created by this programme to be deemed the responsibility of the States.
- ☑ These programmes to actively involve *Panchayati Raj Institutions*.

The Sixth Plan released Rs. 980 crores for this programme from funds in the Central Plan. In 1980-81, i.e. the first year of the Sixth Plan, the entire cost of Rs. 340 crores was borne by the Centre. From 1981-82, the cost of NREP was borne on a 50:50 sharing basis by the Centre and the States.

In the Sixth Plan, NREP schemes generated 700 million man-days of work, thereby providing employment to 8% to 10% of the rural poor.

Subsequently, the Seventh Plan (1985-90) provided assistance to about 20 million families.

e. *RLEGP*

The *Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme* (RLEGP) was launched in the Sixth Plan with a view to providing supplementary employment to the poor in public works. The programme viewed employment as an integral component of development. RLEGP is similar to NREP but has a special emphasis on the landless in the provision of employment. The basic objectives of the programme include:

- ☑ Improvement and expansion of employment opportunities for the rural landless.
- ☑ A guarantee of employment to at least one member of every rural landless labour household for up to 100 days in a year
- ☑ Creation of durable assets for strengthening the rural infrastructure, which was to lead to a rapid progress of the rural economy.

RLEGP is fully funded by the Centre and the State Governments. It is entrusted with the responsibilities of planning, supervision, monitoring and implementation of work projects. Apart from the incidence of poverty, the criteria for allocation of funds to the States include (a) the number of agricultural workers and (b) the number of marginal farmers. The programme requires the wage component in the total cost of a project to be not less than 50%, and the rate of wage paid to the labourers to be fixed at the statutory minimum level.[15]

f. *JRY*

The *Jawahar Rozgar Yojana* (JRY), announced in April, 1989, merged together the programmes under NREP and RLEGP that were in place in the first four years of the Seventh Plan period This was the single largest employment-generating programme under the Eighth Plan, with the two-fold objective of infrastructure development and the generation of wage employment. Poverty alleviation under the JRY aims, through decentralised planning in rural areas, to create the durable assets that were conceived as an instrument to provide an impetus to the development of the rural economy. The work to be undertaken were in the areas of social forestry, soil and water conservation, irrigation and flood control, construction of community assets, rural sanitation, and rural housing.

Under JRY, it is expected that at least one member of each poor family would be provided employment for 50 to 100 days in a year at a work place near his/her residence. About 30% of the jobs under this scheme are reserved for women. Preference is given to SC and ST families. The scheme is the responsibility of the village

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15 V.M. Rao, *Poverty Alleviation in India: Programmes and Action*, New Delhi, Ashis Publishing House, 1989, p.25.

*panchayat*. *Panchayats* with populations of 4,000-5,000 are given assistance of Rs. 80,000 to Rs. 1 lakh.

On the basis of the working of the scheme, certain modifications were made in 1993-94 to ensure better implementation. The primary idea was to achieve 90 to 100 days of employment per person in the backward districts, where there was a concentration of unemployed persons. People below the poverty line constituted the target group for the programme, and preference was given to the SCs and STs and freed bonded labourers. Reservation for women was continued.

JRY is centrally sponsored. Its expenditure is shared by the Centre and the States on an 80:20 basis. This was changed in 1990 to a 60:40 basis.

A review of the sectoral expenditures under JRY between 1989-93 indicates that about 23.5% of allocation was for building roads, 16% for construction of wells, 12.5% for construction of houses, 11.4% for minor irrigation, 7.9% for schools and community buildings, 5% for social forestry, and 23.7% for other rural projects[16]. The creation of durable productive community assets had high priority, with emphasis on developing the infrastructure required for the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes like DDP, DPAP, DWCRA, and IRDP and the construction of primary school buildings.

JRY has two sub schemes - *Indoor* Awas *Yojana* (IAY) and the *Million Wells Scheme*s (MWS). IAY was launched in 1985-86 as a part of the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) and was aimed to provide free dwelling units to the beneficiaries belonging to the poorest sections, the SCs and the STs, and freed bonded labourers. The scope of eligible beneficiaries was extended in 1995-96 to include the families of armed and para-military forces killed in action. The MWS provided financial aid for constructing open irrigation wells. 30% of the allocation under for MWS is provided at the State level. Both IAY and MWS are extended to the non-SC and ST families with the proviso that the outlays do not exceed 4% and 10% of the total allocation respectively.

The JRY was perceived as a multifaceted programme covering social forestry on government and community lands; soil and water conservation works; water harvesting structures; minor irrigation; flood protection; drainage and water-logging works; construction and renovation of village tanks, irrigation wells and field channels; and the construction of houses and sanitary latrines in rural areas. The building of rural roads, land development, and reclamation of wasteland and degraded land are among the other works under JRY. Around Rs. 700 crores were allocated under the scheme to intensify the programme in 120 backward districts (of different States), where

16 K.R. Sudhaman, Rozgar Yojana: Widening Horizon, *Yojana*, vol. 38: no.12, July 15, 1994.

the incidence of the unemployed and underemployed is high. Further, special projects for the prevention of migration of labour, enhancement of women's employment, and special programmes by voluntary agencies for drought and watershed and wasteland development were sponsored under the JRY.

The JRY was recast in 1990 to include urban wage employment, urban micro enterprises and housing and shelter upgradation. Under the second and third of these schemes, the urban poor were assisted to upgrade their skills and set up self-employment ventures, and were provided wage opportunities in which their labour was utilised for the construction of socially useful public assets under the jurisdiction of urban local bodies. The three schemes involved loan and subsidy components of around Rs. 600 crores in 1993-94. JRY covered around 46% of the population.

Table 8.1 summarises the man-days of employment generated by the JRY in the Eighth Plan period.

## Table 8.1. Performance of JRY in the Eighth Five Year Plan

| Year | Allocation (Centre+ States) | Mandays Generated (Millions) |
|---|---|---|
| 1992-3 | 31690.5 | 782.10 |
| 1993-4 | 40594.2 | 1025.84 |
| 1994-5 | 43769.2 | 951.71 |
| 1995-6@ | 48487.0 | 894.72 |
| 1996-7@ | 22367.9 | 381.91 |
| Total | 186908.8 | 4036.28 |

@ Provisional
Source: Documents of the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment and Planning Commission; cited in Meenakshisundaram (1997). Quoted in Chellaiah and Sudarshan, op.cit., p.113.

g. *MNP*

The Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) was taken up in 1974-75 as a part of the Fifth Plan. Sectors within its scope included adult education, rural health, water supply, road building, electrification, houses for landless labourers, nutrition in rural areas, and the improvement of environmental condition in urban slums. The amount released for MNP in 1974-79 was Rs. 1518 crores and during 1980-85, it was Rs. 5807 crores. A study of the Centre for Policy Research

shows that in the Sixth Plan Period, 34.5% of the expenditure was on rural water supply, 20.1% on rural roads, 17.8% on elementary and adult education, 9.8% on rural health, 6.1% on rural housing for the landless labourers, 5.2% on rural electrification, 3.8% on nutrition for children and health care for pregnant women, and 2.6% on improving urban slums.

### *Poverty Alleviation Programmes – a Brief Overall Assessment*

From the plan documents relating to the anti-poverty programmes, these broad guiding principles can be identified:

- ☑ Creation of scope for employment.
- ☑ Raising the productive assets the poor already have.
- ☑ Transfer of assets to those who do not have any and then raising their productivity so that they yield incomes that place the beneficiaries above the poverty line.
- ☑ The eradication of poverty must mean qualitatively more than simply upliftment of income levels of the poor beyond the poverty line.

The main problem in grappling with poverty has been a distinct organisational failure in terms of the implementation of the programmes. Administrative as well as political effort has to be sufficiently strong to contain the complex problem of poverty, which has its roots embedded in the social fabric.

In spite of the difficulties and the criticisms of the Poverty Alleviation Programmes in the Plan period, the long-term trend remains positive: "… the anti-poverty programmes…played an important role in reducing both under-employment and poverty. Not only do the statistical estimates indicate reduction, but field studies in areas affected by drought and scarcity conditions also provide convincing evidence of the beneficial impact of anti-poverty programmes".[17]

## Poverty Reduction: Achievements & Gaps

The overall reduction of poverty, in terms of the percentage of persons below the poverty line or the Head Count Ratio (HCR), has shown a significant downward trend over time (table 8.2). In the first two decades of planning (1950s-1970s), the part of population that remained poor was about 53%. Then there was a steady decline in the 1980s of 15 per cent points to reach 38% in 1987-88. "Over the period…the incidence of poverty…declined at the rate of 2 per cent per year".[18]

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17 Chellaiah and Sudarshan, *op.cit.* p. 129.

18 Ibid. p.9.

Table 8.2. Population Below Poverty Line 1970--1997.

| Year | % of Population |
|---|---|
| 1970 | 53 |
| 1973-74 | 54 |
| 1977-78 | 51 |
| 1983-84 | 44 |
| 1987-88 | 38 |
| 1993-94 | 35 |
| 1997 | 34 |

Sources: NSS data reported in Times of India, 19 April 2000; Expert Group Report on Number of Poor in India, Planning Commission, 1993; Chellaiah and Sudarshan, Income, Poverty and Beyond, 1999.

Note: There are slight variations in the figures given in different sources – hence the percentage points have been ignored.

Three distinct periods in the history of direct interventions for the reduction of poverty that have been a subject of frequent comment are: (a) from 1950s to mid-1970s, (b) mid-1970s to the end of 1980s, and (c) the nineties. The following seems to be the generally agreed conclusion: "…there was no long-term time-trend in poverty from 1950-51 to 1973-74, but…there was thereafter a sharp decline in poverty till 1986-87. After 1986-87, the decline continued at a slower pace till 1989-90, when it was reversed, with a particularly sharp increase in poverty in 1992. Poverty declined again in 1993-94…"[19] The study goes on to observe that "the trend in rural poverty shows a very close similarity with trends in agricultural wages". The trend is also related to markedly increased government expenditure.

On the impact of the liberalisation policy on poverty, the trends are inconclusive; `the post reform trends in poverty do not suggest either an unambiguous improvement or an unambiguous worsening. They do suggest, however, that the initial impact of the stabilisation/structural adjustment package was adverse, that this impinged particularly on the rural sector, with less impact on the urban sector, and that there was some general reversal of the adverse trend subsequently".[20]

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19 Abhijit Sen, *op.cit.* p.2459.

20 Abhijit Sen, *op.cit.* p.2467.

Based on both HCRs and severity indices, one analyst reports that the mid 1980s was a watershed in the improvement in living standards.[21] He argues also that while poverty reduction in urban areas continued into the 1990s, in rural areas, it `… was choked off by the lack of rural growth'.[22] The near stagnation of the rural mean consumption, as shown by NSS data, was however `at variance with significant positive rates of growth in per capita income over the 1990s reported in the National Accounts Statistics (NAS)'.[23] Data discrepancies are reported on also by other researchers, who find divergences between NSS based poverty estimates and those based on MISH - the Market Information Survey of Households of the NCAER (National Council of Applied Economic Research). The authors make out a case for the validity of the MISH-based estimates, which suggest a marked decline in the poverty ratio in the reform era (whereas the NSS indicates stagnation).[24] Other analysts too report on varying estimates and interpretations.[25]

Another significant aspect of poverty in India is the rural-urban gap (Table 8.3). The `poor' are clearly concentrated in rural areas, within which there is even higher concentration among rural labour, especially casual labour, female-headed households, and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.[26] Rural-urban gaps in poverty are wider in the states of West Bengal, Maharashtra, Assam, Orissa and Himachal Pradesh and much narrower in Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.[27] Within the rural sector, the concentration of poor is higher in Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Assam. (These are States that have "a high concentration of tribal groups").

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21 Gaurav Datt, `Has Poverty Declined Since the Economic Reforms?', *Economic & Political Weekly*, December 11-17, 1999, XXXIV (50): 3516-3518.

22 Ibid. pp. 3517-3518.

23 Ibid. pg. 3518.

24 Deepak Lal, Rakesh Mohan and I. Natarajan, `Economic Reforms and Poverty Alleviation: a Tale of Two Surveys', *Economic & Political Weekly*, March 24, 2001, XXXVI (12): 1017-1028.

25 Richard Palmer-Jones and Kunal Sen, `On India's Poverty Puzzles and Statistics of Poverty', *Economic & Political Weekly*, January 20, 2001, XXXVI (3) j: 211-217.

26 Evidence available in ibid.

27 G.H. Peiris, *op.cit.*, p.14.

Table 8.3. Poverty in 1ndia 1970-71 to 1993-94 (Poverty line = Rs..49 Per Capita Per Month at October 1973 - June 1974 Rural Prices)

| Survey Period | Head Count Ratio | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Rural | Urban | Total |
| July 70-June 71 | 54.84 | 44.98 | 52.88 |
| October 73-June 74 | 55.72 | 47.96 | 54.10 |
| July 77-June 78 | 50.60 | 40.50 | 48.36 |
| January 83-December 83 | 45.31 | 35.65 | 43.00 |
| July 87-June 88 | 39.23 | 36.20 | 38.47 |
| July 93-June 94 | 36.66 | 30.51 | 35.04 |

Source: World Bank, India: Achievements and Challenges in Reducing Poverty, Report No.16483-IN, Washington D.C., 1997. Quoted in Chellaiah and Sudarshan, op.cit., p.5.

Inter State variations are quite strong. The percentage of persons below poverty line varies a great deal between the States. In 1993-94, it ranged from 11.77 in Punjab to 54.9 in Bihar. Among the 18 States for which figures are quoted in table 8.4, for nine (Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal) the percentages below the poverty line were below the national average of 35.97. The remaining States had more `poor' than the national average. In the second group of States, Maharashtra was one of the relatively `developed' States. In two States (Haryana and Assam), the percentage of poor *increased* between 1983 and 1993-4. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Orissa registered the highest level of improvement.

Overall, the degree of inter State variation is nothing short of startling; "Kerala has reduced its HCR at an average of 2.4 per cent per year, more than 120 times that of Bihar and four times that of Gujarat".[28] Not only are the inter State variations striking, there are variations *within* the States as well. Thus, in 1974-75, in the 18 rural districts of Karnataka, one of the better performing States, the HCR varied from 67.0% in Gulbarga and 66.4% in Belgaum to 35% in Raichur.[29]

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28 Chellaiah and Sudarshan, *op.cit.*, p.7.

29 Atul Kohli, *The State of Poverty in India*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p.162.

Table 8.4. Head Count Ratio, States of India, 1983, 1993-4, and 1983 to 1993-4.

| State | Percentage of Persons below Poverty line | | Change (Improvement (+)/ deterioration (-) in the period 1983 to 1993-94) | % Change (1993-4 over 1983) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1983 | 1993-4 | (Col 2-Col 3) | (Col 4 as % of Col 2) |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Andhra Pradesh | 28.91 | 22.19 | 6.72 | 23.24 |
| Assam | 40.47 | 40.86 | -0.39 | -0 .96 |
| Bihar | 62.22 | 54.9 | 7.26 | 11.67 |
| Gujarat | 32.79 | 24.21 | 8.58 | 26.17 |
| Haryana | 21.37 | 25.05 | -3.68 | -17.22 |
| Karnataka | 38.24 | 33.16 | 5.08 | 13.28 |
| Kerala | 40.42 | 25.43 | 14.99 | 37.09 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 49.78 | 42.52 | 7.26 | 14.58 |
| Maharashtra | 43.44 | 36.86 | 6.58 | 15.15 |
| Orissa | 65.29 | 48.56 | 16.73 | 25.62 |
| Punjab | 16.18 | 11.77 | 4.41 | 27.26 |
| Rajasthan | 34.46 | 27.41 | 7.05 | 20.46 |
| Tamil Nadu | 51.66 | 35.03 | 16.63 | 32.19 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 47.07 | 40.85 | 6.22 | 13.21 |
| West Bengal | 54.85 | 35.66 | 19.19 | 34.99 |
| All India | 44.48 | 35.97 | 8.51 | 19.13 |

Notes: (a) Col (4) shows the decline in poverty in 1993-4 over 1983 in percentage points of persons below the poverty line. Negative figures indicate an increase in poverty during this period. Col (5) indicates the percentage variation of Col (4) over 1983.

(b)*Includes all states.

Source: Planning Commission Press Note: Estimates of Poverty (March 1997). Quoted in Chellaiah and Sudarshan, op.cit., p.6.

# Human Poverty

The Human Poverty Index is based on a more comprehensive definition of poverty, one linked to `deprivation in health, knowledge and provisioning from both public as well as private sources'.[30] Human Poverty Index scores for 1991-93 are given in Table 8.5. It can be seen from these data that "among the three dimensions, the highest deprivation at an all-India level as well as for the fourteen individual States (the only exception being Punjab) is observed in the case of provisioning, with knowledge following closely. Health deprivation in terms of probability of dying before the age of 40 is found to be lower".[31]

# Food Security & the Public Distribution System

In India `despite a significant reduction in the incidence of poverty…, chronic food insecurity persists with large proportions of the population still below the poverty line'.[32] It often observed that even when food production in the country is `stable' and food is `available', there still exists the problem of food insecurity due to lack of *access* to food, or its non-availability to especially the vulnerable sections. This is attested to by data showing even though food stocks have been increasing, per capita growth of food grain has been on the decline. Thus, the `growth rate in availability of food grains per capita was 1.20 per cent per annum during the 1980s, it has come down to 0.28 per cent per annum during the 1990s…(even though) the level of food grains stock with the Food Corporation of India has been increasing…' [33]

The Public Distribution System (PDS), guided by the `producer price support-cum-consumer subsidy' policy has been the main strategy to look after the food security problem. Introduced in the 1960s in the context of a shortage of food, the PDS was continued in the 1970s, and was seen mainly as a mechanism of price stabilisation. The `welfare' aspect came to be emphasised in the 1980s, when the network was extensively spread to rural areas. Food supplies increased from 6.5 million tons in the mid-1960s to 18.4 million tons in 1990-1992, with food subsidy cost accounting for 0.7 per cent of GDP.[34] There has been an "increase in the annual food subsidy from Rs. 2450 crore in 1990-91 to Rs.9200 crore in 1990-00".[35]

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30 Chellaiah and Sudarshan, *op.cit.*, p.134.

31 Chellaiah and Sudarshan, *op.cit.*, p.139.

32 Ibid. p.73.

33 N.C. Saxena, "How Have the Poor Done?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXV, no.41, 2000.

34 Chellaiah and Sudarshan, *op.cit.* p.39.

35 N.C. Saxena, *op.cit.*

Table 8.5. Human Poverty Index for Indian States, 1991-93

| State | Dimension of Poverty | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Health | Knowledge | Provisioning | Human poverty index |
| A.P. | 14.88 | 49.51 | 42.88 | 40.78 |
| Assam | 21.81 | 41.37 | 61.62 | 47.18 |
| Bihar | 19.48 | 57.25 | 64.40 | 53.60 |
| Gujarat | 16.75 | 33.91 | 38.63 | 32.33 |
| Haryana | 15.37 | 35.67 | 36.43 | 31.90 |
| Karnataka | 15.68 | 39.14 | 41.12 | 35.42 |
| Kerala | 5.14 | 8.47 | 33.22 | 23.19 |
| M.P. | 25.34 | 49.77 | 52.52 | 45.60 |
| Maharashtra | 12.27 | 29.59 | 36.65 | 29.49 |
| Orissa | 22.33 | 44.08 | 56.92 | 45.42 |
| Punjab | 13.87 | 33.86 | 32.32 | 29.27 |
| Rajasthan | 19.88 | 54.70 | 51.82 | 46.96 |
| Tamil Nadu | 13.45 | 30.69 | 32.98 | 28.19 |
| U.P. | 22.24 | 51.83 | 57.32 | 48.32 |
| W.B. | 14.82 | 38.97 | 47.78 | 38.52 |
| India | 17.99 | 42.69 | 48.70 | 40.49 |

Source: Prabhu and Kamdar, "On Defining Poverty from a Human Development Perspective: An Exploratory Exercise", University of Mumbai, 1997 (Mimeo). Quoted in Chellaiah and Sudarshan, op.cit., p.138-39

Yet, the working of the PDS has been found wanting, due to insufficient supplies and poor coverage of States with high incidence of poverty (e.g., Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh), an urban bias (especially in Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal, and `entitlement mistargeting'.[36]

Critiquing the PDS, one author argues that State procurement generates more purchasing power in the surplus producing districts `and little in the

36 R. Radhakrishna et al., "India's Public Distribution System: A National and International Perspective" (Draft), October 1996, Quoted in *Ibid.*

deficit/consuming districts'. This may help to explain why, notwithstanding record foodgrain stocks of the Central Government in recent years, per capita consumption of foodgrains has declined.[37] Besides, the type of food grains sent to deficit areas are not necessarily the variety preferred by the poorer households. Moreover, adequate stocks and mechanisms in place to distribute food are by themselves not sufficient to ensure food security; there can delays in the despatch and arrival of foodgrains, which is a serious matter, for `Stomachs can brook no delay'.[38]

Studies have shown that access to food by the poorer households depends on three `vital conditions' – purchasing power, local or proximate production to ensure *assured access,* and availability of stock of the type preferred by the poorer households. The local or proximate production of food grain can satisfy all these conditions. Not only can it circumvent deficiencies in the transport and timely arrival of foodgrain, there will be a greater likelihood of the production pattern conforming to the local consumption preferences, due to the expansion of employment and purchasing power of the poorer sections. There is thus a case for strengthening the role of the local community in ensuring food security, and for providing greater scope to *panchayati raj*[39]

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37 L.C. Jain, `Panchayati Raj and Food Security', in Pradip Chaturvedi, ed. *Food Security and Panchayati Raj,* New Delhi, Concept, 1997, pg. 45.

38 Ibid. pg. 44-45.

39 Ibid. pp. 44-46.

# Chapter 9

# Women as a Disadvantaged Group

Notwithstanding the gender equality built into the Constitution,[1] both conscious as well as unconscious biases against women operate in almost all the sectors of development - education, nutrition, health, political participation, ownership of property, poverty, and so on. Gender discrimination is so stark as to even endanger female survival itself; son preference in Indian society has fatal consequence for female infants, who receive a less favoured access to life sustaining inputs like food, nutrition and health care.[2] Female deprivation has been interpreted also in terms of `entitlement failures' within the household[3] and women's property rights.[4] Even at the level of State interventions, there are indications of discrimination. Thus, there are strong evidences to suggest that in the "socially redistributive" schemes like the Nutritious Noon Meal Scheme of Tamil Nadu, girls were discriminated against, and that, as a consequently, `... the gains in nutritional status achieved during the decade 1982-92 were massively cornered by boys".[5]

## Policy & Perspectives

Even before Independence, the plight of women in India moved social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Dayananda Saraswati to improve their condition and sensitise the people towards the injustices they had to suffer. Of the many significant legal steps to improve the status of

1 Articles 14, 15, 16, guarantee equality before law, equality of sexes and equal opportunities in all works of life and article 51 A (e) states that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to renounce practices which are derogatory to the dignity of women. Further, four enactments - the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Hindu Succession Act 1956, the Hindu Adoption and Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, were important steps towards improving the status of women.

2 B.D. Miller, *The Endangered Sex,* Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1981.

3 Amartya Sen, *Gender and Cooperative Conflict*, U.N. University, WIDEN Discussion Paper No 18, 1987; Naila Kabeer, *Gender, Production, and Well-being: Rethinking the Household Economy*, IDS Discussion Paper 288, Sussex, 1991.

4 B. Agarwal, A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

5 S. Subramanian and Barbara-Harris-White, "Introduction", in Barbara-Harriss-White and S. Subramanian, (eds.), *Illfare in India,* New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1999, p.33.

women in the pre Independence era are the Sati Abolition Act, 1829, the Caste Disability Removal Act, 1850, the Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act, 1856, the Female Infanticide Prevention Act, 1870, the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, and the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, 1937 (which made a beginning towards granting Hindu women the right to inheritance of property). With the National Independence movement emerging on the scene, Mahatma Gandhi gave a call for women's participation, their economic rehabilitation and social reform.[6] In the first decades of Independence, the aim was `to create new social institutions to provide a base for realising the assurances to women', with an emphasis on `improving women's rights'. Sadly, these efforts were `crippled from the beginning: (a) because they were not extended to all communities; (b) most women remained unaware of their new rights; and (c) the infrastructural and social milieu to make them enforceable was not created'.[7]

The first official attempt to study the status of women in India came with the appointment of the National Committee on the Status of Women in India in 1972. The committee's report showed that despite constitutional guarantees, the roles, rights and participation of women in the different spheres of life was limited. It concluded that "though women do not numerically constitute a minority, they are beginning to acquire the features of a minority community by the three recognised dimensions of inequality: Inequality of class (economic inequity), status (social position) and political power.[8] Some two decades later, the India Country Report for the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women noted that `reproduction and responsibilities of nurture, management of a fragile environment, and low paid or unpaid but heavy work responsibilities in agriculture, animal husbandry, and other traditional sectors create a syndrome of gender stereotypes, marginalisation, alienation, and deprivation'.

a. *Forward Looking Strategies for Women*

As a blueprint for action to improve the status of women, the *Forward Looking Strategies of Women* (FLS) sought policy initiative at the national and international levels in the economic, social, cultural, and legal spheres by the year 2000. The document focussed on strategies to ensure equality, development and peace, with international and regional co-operation in respect to the participation and integration of women in all social spheres. The government response to the FLS took the shape of revitalising the national administrative machinery by setting up a separate *Department of Women and Child Development* under the newly created Ministry of Human Resource Development. In 1990, the National Commission for Women was set up with the specific purpose of monitoring the constitutional and legal rights of women. This has

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6 Leela Kasturi and Veena Mazumdar (eds.), *Women and Indian Nationalism*, New Delhi, Sage, 1994.

7 Veena Mazumdar, *Gender Dimensions of Social Development*, New Delhi, Centre for Women's Development Studies (Mimeo), p.17.

8 *Towards Equality – Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India*, Government of India, Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, December 1974, p.301.

been one major type of policy thrust. Additionally, the policies of the government have had specific provisions for women, as in the National Policy on Education (1986), The National Health Policy (1983), the National Population Policy (1993) and the National Nutrition Policy (1993).

b. *National Commission for Women (NCW)*

The NCW was set up in January 1992 as a statutory body under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990, to safeguard the rights and interests of women. The Commission was set up with the following objectives:

- ☑ To investigate, examine and review matters relating to the safeguards provided for women in the Constitution.
- ☑ To review the implementation of women-specific and women-related legislation and suggest necessary amendments, if need be.
- ☑ To function as an agency to keep a watch towards facilitating redressal of grievances of women.

c. *The National Perspective Plan for Women (NPP), 1988*

The NPP was drawn up to ease the process of linking women’s issues to the mainstream policies and programmes. It recognised the need to focus on women’s concerns but discouraged women’s development as a separate sub stream. Its strategy was to provide for women a democratic, egalitarian, secular and co-operative social structure. The NPP formulated an action framework for rural development, health, legislation, political participation, education, employment, support services, communication and voluntary action.

d. *Support Services*

Support services provided by the governments for women and children of the weaker sections include

- ☑ Hostels for working women, some of which also have attached day-care centres.
- ☑ A National Crèche Fund for meeting the increasing demand for crèches.
- ☑ Short stay homes for women and girls in difficult circumstances.
- ☑ The Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS), which not only supports pregnant and nursing mothers, but also caters to school dropouts aged between 11-18 and seeks to meet their special needs of nutrition, health, education, literacy, recreation, and skill development.

e. *The National Plan of Action for the Girl Child (1991-2000)*

This decadal plan of action for the girl-child sought to focus on gender specific needs,[9] with the initiatives under the plan extending to cover

9 Plans of Action to cater to the local and overall development of the girl child were drawn up also by the State governments.

legislation to ban sex determination tests (a measure meant to avert female foeticide).

- ☑ A survey of the problem of female infanticide.
- ☑ Multi-media campaigns to develop a positive image of the girl-child.
- ☑ Compilation of gender disaggregated data and detailed bibliographies of studies relating to girls.

f. *Socio-Economic Programme (SEP)*

The SEP was implemented by the Central Social Welfare Board, which provides work and wage to needy women such as destitutes, widows, deserted women, the economically backward, and the handicapped. Since its inception in 1958, the SEP has worked for the upkeep of literate, semi-literate and illiterate women, and for their initiation into both traditional and non-traditional trades.

g. *Condensed Courses of Education and Vocational Training for Adult Women (CCE and VT)*

Commencing from 1958, these courses have provided new avenues of employment through continuing education and vocational training for women and girl school dropouts. As of March, 1994, about 7.20 lakh adult women and young girls received continuing and vocational training. A cumulative expenditure of Rs. 66.72 crore was incurred.

h. *Employment, Income Generation & Production Units*

Under this scheme, launched in 1982-83 with the objective of providing training and employment opportunities to women in non-traditional and upcoming trades, women from economically weak backgrounds are provided training in electronics, computer programming, printing, binding, weaving, spinning and garment making, etc.

i. Support to Training & Employment Programme for Women (STEP)

Launched in 1987, STEP aims to upgrade the skills of poor women by providing them training in the traditional sectors of agriculture, fisheries, handloom, handicrafts, animal husbandry, social forestry, waste land development, etc.

j. *The* Shramshakti *Report of the National Commission for Self-employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector (1988)*

The Commission, for the first time, brought to light women's contribution in urban areas and to the growth of the informal economy. It studied the situation of women in the informal sector in the categories of self-employed and wage-labour, paid and unpaid workers, and contractual workers. The Commission's findings were based both on observation and discussions with governmental and non-

governmental organisations and social activists. Lack of organisation among women was identified as a key factor in their exploitation. The Commission's Report suggested the setting up an exclusive credit body for poor and self-employed women. It recommended the linking of all training programmes to women's employment, so that living conditions of poor women improve.

k. *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)*

The RMK, set up as a registered society in March 1993 to meet the credit needs of poor women, particularly from the informal sector, operates through non-governmental organisations in providing micro-credit to women so as to help them attain self-sufficiency and meet contingency needs.

l. Mahila Samriddhi Yojana (MSY)

The MSY, launched in October, 1993, seeks to empower women by improving their economic status. It aims to promote the saving habit amongst rural women and to thereby improve their financial assets. The scheme offers small deposits with attractive rates of interest and operates through the network of post-offices. The MSY has enabled women not only to inculcate thrift habits but has also enhanced their participation in various developmental activities.

m. *Indira Mahila Yojana*

The *Indira Mahila Yojana* visualised an integrated delivery of services for women and children, and developed a new sense of awareness among women, especially in the rural areas. It sought to empower women as active participants in effecting social regeneration.

n. *Report of the National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners (1980)*

The Expert Committee studied the condition of women prisoners in the criminal correctional justice system and made a series of recommendations suggesting legislation, custodial correctional and prison reforms relating to women prisoners. The National Commission is monitoring implementation of these recommendations by the Central and State Governments for Women.

o. Role of Voluntary Agencies

Towards improving the status and position of women, the role of voluntary agencies is significant in the fields of school education, health, family welfare, social work, and women's development and education. Many government programmes are operated largely through NGOs and important initiatives have emerged from the voluntary agencies themselves. Voluntary organisations have been in the forefront in activities like advocacy of women' s issues, and organising self-help groups in the distribution of micro-credit. The Central Social Welfare Board, the apex agency at the national level, co-ordinates and

promotes the activities of about 12,000 voluntary grassroots organisations. Other organisations at the village, block, district and State levels too operate in the field of Women and Child Development.

# Women in the Five Year Plans

The development process in India as envisaged by the Five-Year Plans was to be geared to an equal share for women in development. Development for and the welfare of woman received particular attention from the beginning of the planning process. Women were provided special attention in three sectors - education, social welfare, and health. At the same time, a proactive role for women was envisaged. The Central Social Welfare Board encouraged women's organisations, especially at the grassroots, to promote welfare measure in partnership with the government, with *mahila mandals* conceived as delivery mechanisms. Thus, `… there was a conceptual thrust (even though inadequately articulated) towards actively involving and stimulating the participation of women's organisations in the processes of change'. [10]

## *A. The First Plan*

The First Plan focussed on women's legitimate role in the family and in the community and emphasised the need for adequate welfare services.[11] A well-organised social service department was set up to look after women and child welfare. The Plan suggested the following measures:

- ☑ An advisory committee to be set up by the Central Government to make proposals and review progress in respect of law and policy in different States.
- ☑ Enforcement of the law to be effectively carried out. Measures to enforce the law to include, wherever necessary, the creation of a separate vigilance branch within the police force.
- ☑ Adequate arrangements to be made for medical assistance.
- ☑ Wherever it was found that clandestine prostitution was in existence, efforts to be made to eradicate it.
- ☑ More institutions to be organised by local bodies and private social service agencies.
- ☑ Homes providing shelter, medical aid and assistance for marriage to function under the management of trained personnel and be subject to regulation, inspection and control.
- ☑ Strengthening of existing specialised and private agencies like vigilance associations and societies for the prevention of traffic in women.

10 Veena Mazumdar, "Women: From Equality to Empowerment" in Hiranmay Karlekar (ed.), *Independent India: The First Fifty Years*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1998, p.260.

11 Government of India, *First Five Year Plan*, p.621.

## B. The Second Plan

The Second Plan (1956-61) retained the welfare approach to women's issues, together with an appreciation of the need to organise women workers. The Plan took cognisance of the plight of the women workers on account of social prejudices/disabilities, as also the need to provide maternity benefits to them, protect women from injurious work, and set up crèches for their children. It was recognised that the equal pay for equal work policy required speedy implementation, together with the provision of training, to enable women compete for higher jobs.

## C. The Third Plan

The Third Plan (1961-66) envisaged female education as a major strategy of welfare. Under `social welfare', the emphasis was on the provision of rural welfare services and condensed educational courses. Health services were geared to maternal and child welfare, and also, health education, nutrition and family planning.

## D. The Fourth Plan

The Fourth Plan (1969-74) emphasised women's education and the promotion of women's welfare within the family. To bring down the birth rate, spending on family planning was increased. The plan agenda extended also to the immunisation of pre-school children, and the supplementary feeding of children and of expectant and nursing mothers.

## E. The Fifth Plan

The Fifth Plan (1974-78) marked a shift in the approach towards women from 'welfare' to 'development', with the scope of social welfare expanding to cope with the problems of the family and the role of women. The new approach was one of integrating welfare with developmental services.

## F. The First Five Plans

The first plan recognised the problems of high infant and maternal mortality as primarily due to malnutrition, and thus undertook to develop school-feeding schemes in the State Public Health Departments and Maternity and Child Health Centres. Though important in their own spheres, the programmes centred on welfare measures for women in the context of their traditional role in the family. The welfare approach to women continued into the Second Plan, which also took cognisance of the condition of women workers, not only as a comparatively less organised category, but also, as a vulnerable one, in view of the social prejudices and physical disabilities suffered by them. Women were to be protected against injurious work and receive maternity benefits, and crèches for their children were to be set up. Speedy implementation of equal pay for equal work was suggested, together

with the provision for training to enable women compete for higher jobs and expand opportunities for part-time employment.[12]

In the early years of planning, the assumption was that women would automatically benefit from the overall measures for national development. In the initial development plans, women were, for the main part, the `passive beneficiaries' of welfare programmes. In the seventies, winds of change began to blow. In 1975, the Committee on the Status of women in India[13] comprehensively assessed women's problems in terms of its social, economic, legislative and political dimensions and made several recommendations to secure social justice for women, remove obstacles to their advancement, and provide them opportunities so that they could realise their potential to the full. The International Women's Year and the International Women's Decade too provided a significant thrust to the changes in policy towards women's issues. Efforts were directed towards the formulation of alternative strategies for women's development and an information system for monitoring and evaluating progress. The capacity of the administration to better plan and administer women's development programmes and the need to strengthen it too received emphasis.

## *G. The Sixth Plan*

The Sixth Plan (1980-85) `for the first time in India's planning history' included `a chapter on women and development'.[14] This was an important step towards planning for women's development. Indian women were perceived no longer as subjects for welfare, they were seen as active partners in development. Women's development needs as well as numbers of beneficiaries were identified for several beneficiary oriented programmes. A National Perspective Plan for women was prepared. Special institutions for women's development were established, among them, the National Committee on Women under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister. A separate Bureau of Women's Development was set up by the Department of Social Welfare, followed by the creation of a separate Department of Women and Child Development and the setting up of special cells to deal with women's issues in different sectors. Finally, the National Commission for Women Act of 1990 provided for the setting up of a commission with a wide range of functions for safeguarding women's rights, guiding their socio-economic development and evaluating the measures taken for women's development.

## *H. The Seventh Plan*

The Seventh Plan (1985-90) continued with the approach of development programmes for women with the objective of raising their socio-economic status and bringing them into the mainstream of national development. Beneficiary-oriented programmes were promoted with the purpose of

12 Second Five Year Plan, p. 602

13 Towards Equality, *op.cit.*

14 Veena Mazumdar, "Women: From Equality...", *op.cit.*, p.265.

extending direct benefits to women. Chapter 14 of the Plan document `demonstrated some advance in the use of feminist language', as also `… a substantive acknowledgement of women's important role in agriculture and allied sectors and the existence of a gap between the actual social reality and its perception by society at large. However, in identifying concrete strategies, there was a tendency to slide back into women-specific sectors and a refusal to extend the quota or the special component Plan approach'. [15] Still, ` … the Department of Rural Development announced a 30 % quota for women in all anti-poverty programmes in rural areas, in addition to the women-specific experimental programme (Development of Women & Children in Rural Areas) introduced midway through the Sixth Plan'.[16]

### *I. The Eighth Plan*

The Eighth Plan (1992-97) sought to ensure that women were not bypassed in access to the benefits of development from the different sectors. Special programmes were to be implemented to enrich the existing development programmes, and benefits to women in the sectors of education, health, and employment were to be monitored. Women were to be equal partners in the development process. The approach shifted from women's development to women's empowerment. Yet, the change in economic policy in the Eighth Plan period `made the Approach Paper and Policy Framework very different from the earlier documents'. In Part I, women were ` … mentioned only in the context of the need for population control', while in Part II, ` … the sectoral chapters do not mention women except in the context of women-specific programmes'. [17] Moreover, the concept of a women's quota, is not mentioned – not even in the rural Development or Poverty Alleviation chapter.'[18]

# Women in Poverty

Women constitute about one fourth of the work force in India. They have a significant representation in the formal sector, where they constitute 16% of the workers, and have more of a presence in the informal sector. Together with the inequity in the labour market, the situation of women is characterised by gender difference in access to land, productive resources, information, skills and education.

For poor households, women's capacity to work, her health, and her knowledge are vital for survival. Statistics show that the labour force participation of women and their proportional contribution to the total family income are the highest in households with the lowest economic status. Thus, the poorest families are the most dependent on women's economic productivity.

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15 Ibid. pg. 265.

16 Ibid. pg. 266.

17 Ibid. pg. 269.

18 Ibid. pg. 269.

As the percentage of women in extreme poverty is estimated to be large, reservations have been made in favour of women in the major poverty alleviation programmes (details as under)

- ☑ IRDP – the initial 10% reservation for women in 1985-86 was increased to 34% in 1993-34.
- ☑ TRYSEM- this programme has 40% reservation for women. Till 1995, over 14,22,000 women benefited from this programme.
- ☑ JRY- the share of women till 1995 was 1035.93 million person days i.e., of the total employment generated under the programme, 24.19% went in favour of women.
- ☑ *Indira Awas Yojana* (IAY)- Under this programme, dwelling units were allotted to women or were allotted in joint names with women, so that women could own assets.
- ☑ DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas): This programme has been in operation since 1982-83. Around 18000 groups constituted of women below the poverty line have been formed to take up economic activities to enhance their income generating capabilities and to improve their quality of life.
- ☑ Since 1986-87, Women's Development Corporations, constituted by the States, have made efforts to help women entrepreneurs and women co-operatives.
- ☑ NABARD (National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development) - schemes relating to Priority Sector Lending (PSL) have been in operation and formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been encouraged to make small credit available to women. Currently 2000 SHGs are in operation, of which women run 90%.
- ☑ SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association), seeks to reach out to poor-illiterate, self-employed women through the formation of women's co-operatives. The thirty thousand women members of SEWA include vendors and traders, home based skilled and semi-skilled workers and service providers in rural and urban sectors, who have formed their own co-operatives.

To combat the problem of poverty among women in urban areas, the Urban Basic Services Programme (UBSP) under the *Nehru Rozgar Yojana* (NRY) has been formulated. 30% of the beneficiaries are women, whom the UBSP seeks to empower and actively involve in the planning and implementation of community development activities. Over 33,000 women, called Resident Community Volunteers (RVC), devote time in their own neighbourhood towards overall community development. Many of these volunteers are very poor, apart from being illiterate or semiliterate. In urban areas, women also benefit from thrift and credit societies, which are rapidly expanding.

# Women & Health

Morbidity, nutritional status, and reproductive health are central concerns, as is the high rate of maternal mortality - as many as 15% of all the deaths among women occurring between the age-group 15-44 years, are maternal mortality related deaths. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) too is high among females. The concerns with the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and the IMR

date back to The Bhore Committee Report (1943), with the Mudaliar Committee Report (1961) also making special mention of these.

## A. *The Female Male Ratio*

Against this backdrop of female disadvantage and deprivation, the female-male ratio, or the number of females per thousand males, has consistently fallen below par, as per the testimony of the censuses of India for more than a century. Census data also attest to a steady overall deterioration in the FMR since the turn of the twentieth century, a trend evident even after Independence. While in 1901, there were 972 females per thousand males, by 2001, the figure had dropped to 933 (Table 9.1). The sharpest decline occurred between 1961 and 1971, after which the FMR has fluctuated marginally around 930. [19]

One explanation for the adverse female-male ratio is the underenumeration of women in the census of India, but the pheonmenon has also been explained in terms of higher female mortality due to a distinct preference for sons in Indian society with the resultant neglect of female children; adverse impact of frequent child bearing on female health; and the higher occurrence of certain diseases in females. Analysts attribute unbalanced female-male ratios to `unequal access for women to life sustaining inputs like food, nutrition and health care … (amounting) to extended infanticide',[20] women's property rights[21] and entitlement failures within the household.[22] There are strong evidences to suggest that even in the `socially redistributive' schemes like the Nutritious Noon Meal Scheme of Tamil Nadu, `girls are increasingly discriminated against in access to such State schemes and that gains in nutritional status achieved during the decade 1982-92 were massively cornered by boys.[23]

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19 Census of India 2001, Paper 1 of 2001, Provisional Population Totals, pg. 85.

20 B.D. Miller. 1981. The Endangered Sex. Ithaca, NY : Cornell University Press.

21 B. Agarwal. 1994. A Field of One's Own : Gender and Land Rights in South Asia. Cambridge University Press.

22 Amartya Sen. 1987. *Gender and Cooperative Conflict*. U.N. University. WIDER Discussion Paper No. 18; Naila Kabeer, 1991. *Gender, Production and Well Being: Rethinking the Household Economy*. IDS Discussion Paper 288, Sussex.

23 S. Subramanian and Barbara Harriss-White. 1993. `Introduction', in Barbara Harriss White and S. Subramanian, eds. Illfare in India. New Delhi : Sage Publications. Pg. 33

Table 9.1. Female Male Ratio, India, 1901-2001

| Year | FMR |
|---|---|
| 1901 | 972 |
| 1911 | 964 |
| 1921 | 955 |
| 1931 | 950 |
| 1941 | 945 |
| 1951 | 946 |
| 1961 | 941 |
| 1971 | 930 |
| 1981 | 934 |
| 1991 | 927 |

Source: Census of India, 2001, Paper 1 of 2001 – Provisional Population Totals, pg. 85

## B. *Age at Marriage of Women*

Child-Marriage in India has been not just an indicator of the low level of development among women, but also a cause - early marriage hampers both physical and personality development of the girl-child. The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1976 raised the minimum age of marriage of girls to 15 to 18 years, with the intention of preventing child marriages, which led to early pregnancies among girls. The Act aimed to prevent both young-age fertility and also the birth of premature babies. Higher education among women and greater employment opportunities for them have also been responsible for raising the marriage-age. According to the Country Report of the Government of India for the Fourth World Conferences on Women at Beijing, 1995, the mean age of marriage of girls rose from 13 years at the beginning of the century to 18.3 years by 1981. In 1992, the `mean age at 'effective marriage' was 19.5 years.

## C. *Health Initiatives for Women*

Several Maternal and Child Health Programmes [MCH] have become a part of the various 5-Year Plans. The *Child Survival and Safe Motherhood Programme* (CSSM), initiated in August, 1992, sought to intervene in the spheres of morbidity and mortality, vitamin A prophylaxis, immunisation, prevention and treatment of anaemia, promotion of institutions for maternal care, treatment of maternal complications, management of obstetric emergencies, and the promotion of birth spacing. Efforts have also been directed towards modernising traditional maternal care and delivery techniques, including the strengthening the role of Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM), the Lady Health Visitor (LHV) and the Multipurpose Health Workers in the Health System. Health initiatives for women have taken cognisance of the following problems areas

- ☑ The lack of female medical officers in peripheral health institutes.
- ☑ The need for improvement in interpersonal communication.

- ☑ The need to rapidly organise village level groups like *mahila swasthya sangaths.*
- ☑ Low nutritional status of women - programmes like the Public Employment Programmes, the Special Feeding Programme, and the Public Distribution System have targeted women and children as special groups with a need for food inputs.
- ☑ The effect of environmental degradation on women's health.
- ☑ Women's health is affected by the use of pesticide in agriculture.

# Women & the Educational Sphere

## *A. Elements of Policy*

The government sought to intervene in the area of girl's education by providing it a gender focus. This has involved

- ☑ Flexible school timings to accommodate girls.
- ☑ Residential schools for girl-students.
- ☑ Gender sensitive curricula and textbooks.
- ☑ Recruitment of women teachers.
- ☑ Improved school buildings with toilets for girls.
- ☑ Incentives for the education of girls.
- ☑ Gender sensitisation for teachers and project managers.
- ☑ Formation of village-level women's collectives.
- ☑ Training of local women activist to catalyse collective actions around educational issues.
- ☑ Empowerment of local bodies such as village education committees, mother-teacher associations and women's groups, to enable them to take responsibility in their areas.
- ☑ Intensive capacity building of community and women's groups to focus on issues of education for girls.
- ☑ Encouragement to private and voluntary sectors in promoting girls and women's education in the country.
- ☑ Free education for girls in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Mizoram, and Lakshadweep.

## *B. Committees & Commissions*

After Independence, the Government of India appointed several commissions and committees to look into women's education.

a. *University Education Commission* (1948-49).

The University Education Commission recognised the need and importance of making educational opportunities available to women. It recommended that the ordinary amenities and decencies of life be provided for women in colleges, and advocated the development of women as both women and as citizens. Educational counselling was recommended to overcome prejudices against home-economics and home management, and women teachers were to be provided salaries on par with their male colleagues, on the principle of equal pay for

equal work. The Commission also noted the necessity of separate schools for boys and girls in the 13-18 year age group.

b. *Secondary Education Commission* (1952-53)

The Commission felt that there was no need to deal with women's education separately. In regard to co-education, there was considerable difference of opinion. The Commission suggested that separate schools for girls be established, wherever possible.

c. *National Committee on Women's Education* (1958-59)

The Committee felt that State wise comprehensive development plans for girls should be conceived. Concessions for girls were recommended at the primary level, together with more co-educational institutions at the middle and secondary levels. Steps towards additional training institutions for women teachers in all areas was suggested, together with scholarships for girls to encourage them to study traditionally male-dominated subjects like commerce, engineering and agriculture. It was suggested that voluntary organisations be involved in this task.

d. *Committee on Differentiation of Curricula For Boys & Girls* (1961)

This committee emphasised that the traditional concepts of the inferiority of women be removed from the public mind.

e. *Committee to Look Into the Causes for the Lack of Public Support, Particularly in Rural Areas, for Girls Education and to Enlist Public Co-Operation* (1963)

The Committee recommended concerted efforts to popularise girls education. It suggested school improvement conferences, attractive conditions of work for women teachers, involvement of local bodies in providing school buildings, equipment, playing fields, etc, literacy classes for women, and the provision of elective subjects of special interest to girls.

f. *Education Commission* (1964-66)

The Commission reiterated the measures recommended by National Committee on Women's Education for accelerating the education of girls - provision of separate schools for girls, hostels and scholarships, part-time and vocational courses, increasing the scope for correspondence courses, employment of women teachers, and the setting up of research units in universities to deal with women's education.

g. *Committee on the Status of Women* (1971-74)

☑ The Committee suggested adoption of co-education at primary and secondary levels as a general policy, and recommended that

common courses of general education be made available to both the sexes till class X.

- ☑ Free compulsory education of girls till the secondary stage was suggested, as also the opening up of both full-time and the part-time job opportunities, whereby women might participate in productive activities.
- ☑ It was further recommended that the social effectiveness of women be enhanced.
- ☑ The educational system was to be developed to produce young men and women of character and ability, who are committed to work for development and national service. Local schools were to be developed towards that end.
- ☑ Mobile schools were advocated for the children of the migrant labour force, including the children of nomadic tribes, migrant labour and construction workers.
- ☑ 50% of the teachers in girl's schools were to be women.[24]

☑ Greater flexibility in the school admission procedure was advised to enable the girls complete their schooling.

h. *National Commission on Self-Employed Women & Women in the Informal Sector* (1987-88)

The Commission was of the opinion that education is an important instrument towards increasing and improving the chances of women's employability and for empowering them so that they become confident and further develop the capability to identify and contest areas of exploitation and discrimination. The Commission suggested steps to be taken for working women and their children, whereby they, and especially their girl children, may benefit. These include incentives for sending the girl-child to school such as mid-day meals, free text-books and exercise-books, at least up to the primary level, syllabi suited to the students of rural areas, emphasis on the vocational aspects of education, scholarships for girls, and hostel facilities. The Commission's report was viewed by activists and the women's' movement as `fairly representative of the voice of women's movement, especially as it brought out the articulation of poor women in rural and urban areas sharply into focus'.[25]

i. *National Policy on Education (1986) & Programme Of Action* (1992)

The National Policy on Education (1986) identified education as the agent of basic change in the status of women. Education was to be redesigned as a whole so that is could play an interventionist role in women's empowerment. Emphasis was laid on the participation of women in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels. Women were to be so educated that they had a positive self-image and were confident of themselves. At the societal level, group action was to be encouraged to ensure equal participation of men and

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24 In 1986-87, 38% of the primary school teachers were women, with the figure going up to 50% in 1997-98.

25 Ibid., p.29.

women. Commenting on the Policy, one analyst argues that the "incorporation of a section on Education for Equality in the New Education Policy of 1986…was a token gesture, included perhaps to partially offset the loss of political face by the Government of India's surrender to fundamentalist forces – with the enactment of the Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act in the same month'.[26]

On the heels of the National Policy on Education of 1986 came the Programme of Action (1992), which emphasised education for women's equality, with priority to participation and empowerment.

*j. National Commission for Women (1992)*

The National Commission for Women, established in January, 1992, set up a Legal Unit to give shape to its objectives. It established institutional linkages with those concerned with women's issues, initiated studies on the impact of economic reforms on women, and focussed on the gender perspective for the electronic and the print media. The Commission has also sought to raise awareness regarding women's issues, apart from holding public hearings to ascertain the grievances of women. Yet, as "a subordinate agency of the Department of Women and Child Development", the National Commission for Women was "left…at the mercy of the bureaucracy".[27]

## *C. Women's Education - Ground Realities*

While literacy rates have been on the rise since the turn of the century, for both males and females, census data show that the female literacy rate continues to lag behind (table 9.2). Data from another source - the UGC Annual Report 1994-95, also attests to female disadvantage in the educational sphere; it reports the enrolment of women to total enrolment at a mere 33.8 per cent. Within the country, States differ vastly in terms of literacy attainments and in particular, in terms of the literacy profile of females. Yet, female literacy rates lag behind those for males in every State (table 9.3). Even when children are enrolled in schools, the drop out rates are higher for girls (table 9.4).

The social attitude towards the girl-child is determined by factors of supply and demand. The demand factors include poverty situations, the family's inability to bear schooling costs for its children, poor health and lower status of women and anticipation of their discrimination in the job market. Supply side factors affecting the social attitude towards women's education include insufficient schools, distant location of schools (which makes parents apprehensive of sending young girls far away from home), inflexible school timings, and gender insensitive curricula. A deficiency of female teachers is also thought to be a factor at work. However, there has been some improvement in this regard. While in 1986-87, 38% of the primary school teachers were women. This improved to more than 50% in 1997. Due to the

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26 Veena Mazumdar, *Gender Dimensions*, op cit. pg. 25.

27 Veena Mazumdar, "Women: From Equality...", *op.cit.*, p.270.

play of varied factors, the drop out rate is higher for girls as compared to boys at every stage of school education. Almost three fourths of the girls drop out at the high school level.

a. *What Went Wrong.*

As one analyst sees it, the educational opportunities provided to women `remained flawed because (a) the vast majority of women remained untouched by these opportunities; (b) the scope of counter socialisation against all social – including gender – inequalities that the educational process contained was not utilised, but used instead to create new inequalities and gaps; and (c) the structures of patriarchy, and boundary maintenance between communities were left to chance and the process of natural, gradual change.[28]

Table 9.2.Literacy Rates, India, 1901-2001

| Year | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1901 | 9.83 | 0.60 | 5.35 |
| 1911 | 10.56 | 1.05 | 5.92 |
| 1921 | 12.21 | 1.81 | 7.16 |
| 1931 | 15.59 | 2.93 | 9.50 |
| 1941 | 24.90 | 7.30 | 16.10 |
| 1951 | 24.95 | 7.93 | 16.67 |
| 1961 | 34.44 | 12.95 | 24.02 |
| 1971 | 39.45 | 18.69 | 29.45 |
| 1981 | 46.89 | 24.82 | 36.23 |
| 1991 | 52.74 | 32.17 | 42.84 |
| 2001 | 64.13 | 45.84 | 55.30 |

28 Veena Mazumdar, Gender Dimensions, op. cit. pg. 17

Table 9.3. Literacy Rates for 7+ Population & Disparity Index, India & States, 2001

| State / Union Territory | Literacy Rate | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Males | Females |
| Kerala | 90.92 | 94.20 | 87.86 |
| Mizoram | 88.49 | 93.15 | 86.13 |
| Lakshwadeep | 87.52 | 90.69 | 81.56 |
| Goa | 82.32 | 88.89 | 76.65 |
| Delhi | 81.82 | 88.88 | 75.51 |
| Chandigarh | 81.76 | 88.40 | 75.29 |
| Pondicherry | 81.49 | 87.37 | 75.00 |
| A & N Islands | 81.18 | 86.27 | 74.13 |
| Daman & Diu | 81.09 | 86.07 | 70.37 |
| Maharashtra | 77.27 | 86.02 | 68.08 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 77.13 | 85.65 | 67.51 |
| Tripura | 73.66 | 84.01 | 65.41 |
| Tamil Nadu | 73.47 | 82.33 | 64.55 |
| Uttaranchal | 72.28 | 81.47 | 63.55 |
| Gujarat | 69.97 | 80.50 | 61.92 |
| Punjab | 69.95 | 79.25 | 61.46 |
| Sikkim | 69.68 | 77.87 | 60.41 |
| West Bengal | 69.22 | 77.86 | 60.26 |
| Manipur | 68.87 | 77.58 | 60.22 |
| Haryana | 68.59 | 76.80 | 59.70 |
| Nagaland | 67.11 | 76.73 | 58.60 |
| Karnataka | 67.04 | 76.46 | 57.45 |
| Chhatisgarh | 65.18 | 76.29 | 56.31 |
| Assam | 64.28 | 75.95 | 56.03 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 64.11 | 75.63 | 52.40 |
| Orissa | 63.61 | 73.32 | 51.17 |
| Meghalaya | 63.31 | 71.93 | 50.97 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 61.11 | 71.77 | 50.28 |
| Rajasthan | 61.03 | 70.85 | 44.34 |
| Dadra & N.H. | 60.03 | 70.23 | 44.24 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 57.36 | 67.94 | 42.99 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 54.74 | 66.14 | 42.98 |
| J & K | 54.46 | 65.75 | 41.82 |
| Jharkhand | 54.13 | 64.07 | 39.38 |
| Bihar | 47.53 | 60.32 | 33.57 |
| India | 65.38 | 75.85 | 54.16 |

Source: Statement 32: Ranking of States & Union Territories by Literacy Rate and Sex, 2001. Census of India, Paper 1 of 2001, Provisional Population Totals, pp. 117-118

(The literacy rates for India, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh have been worked out by excluding areas where enumeration of the Census of India 2001 could not be conducted due to natural calamities. Details in Census of India, paper 1 of 2001, pp. 118 & 121)

Table 9.4. Percentage Drop Out at Different Stages of School Education, India, 1960-61 – 1997-1998

| Year | Boys | | | Girls | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Primary | Middle | High School | Primary | Middle | High School |
| 1960-61 | 61.74 | 18.77 | 7.51 | 70.93 | 25.57 | 11.02 |
| 1965-66 | 63.17 | 18.99 | 11.14 | 70.49 | 23.10 | 16.12 |
| 1970-71 | 64.48 | 22.78 | 13.19 | 70.92 | 27.31 | 18.12 |
| 1975-76 | 60.71 | 21.08 | 10.78 | 66.18 | 29.08 | 15.77 |
| 1980-81 | 56.64 | 68.00 | 79.80 | 62.50 | 79.40 | 86.63 |
| 1981-82 | 51.10 | 68.50 | 79.44 | 57.30 | 77.70 | 86.81 |
| 1982-83 | 49.40 | 66.04 | 78.21 | 56.30 | 74.96 | 86.24 |
| 1983-84 | 47.83 | 66.10 | 76.41 | 53.96 | 75.27 | 84.79 |
| 1988-89 | 46.74 | 59.38 | 72.68 | 49.69 | 68.31 | 79.46 |
| 1989-90 | 46.50 | 61.00 | 70.99 | 50.35 | 68.75 | 77.72 |
| 1990-91 | 40.10 | 59.12 | 67.50 | 45.97 | 65.13 | 76.96 |
| 1992-93p | 40.07 | 53.99 | 68.15 | 43.02 | 60.06 | 74.69 |
| 1993-94 | 36.07 | 49.95 | 68.41 | 39.05 | 56.78 | 74.54 |
| 1994-95p | 35.18 | 50.02 | 67.15 | 37.80 | 56.53 | 73.38 |
| 1995-96p | 37.92 | 54.99 | 66.36 | 41.31 | 61.70 | 74.07 |
| 1996-97p | 39.37 | 51.89 | 66.82 | 38.35 | 52.77 | 73.04 |
| 1997-98p | 38.23 | 50.72 | 67.65 | 41.34 | 58.61 | 72.65 |

Source: Statement 32: Ranking of States & Union Territories by Literacy Rate and Sex, 2001. Census of India, Paper 1 of 2001, Provisional Population Totals, pp. 117-118
(The literacy rates for India, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh have been worked out by excluding areas where enumeration of the Census of India 2001 could not be conducted due to natural calamities. Details in Census of India, paper 1 of 2001, pp. 118 & 121)

*b. Grounds for Optimism*

It is noteworthy that, in recent years, the female literacy profile has shown significant improvement. In the decade 1981-1991, it increased at a faster rate than the male literacy rate, and preliminary indications are that the trend has been carried forwards to 2001.

In notching up successes, mention must be made also of the National Literacy Mission. "The mass literacy campaigns initiated by the National Literacy Mission since 1991 has virtually taken on the shape of women's movement in many parts of the country – manifesting trends for which its planners and advocates were utterly unprepared".[29]

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29 Veena Mazumdar, "Gender Dimensions...", *op.cit.*, pp.25-26.

# Women in the Public Sphere

## *A. Women in Parliament & State Legislatures*

Women's participation in decision making has been poor in India, at both the national and State levels. Since Independence, their representation in Parliament as well as in the State legislatures has been quite low (Table 9.5).[30] Data suggest also that the fact of women in political office is unrelated to indicators of women's status (Table 9.6); `Women's representation is not directly a function of any of the standard indicators … States like Kerala, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu with higher literacy, or comparatively high female literacy, fare worse on this score. Surprisingly, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh, marked by a poor record on female literacy, have shown a better than average representation of women. Notwithstanding the disparities, the under-representation of women is evenly spread across all States".[31] A bill for reservation of seats for women has been before parliament, but could not be passed for want of political consensus.

### Table 9.5. Women's Representation in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, 1952-57 to 1996

| Term | Lok Sabha | Rajya Sabha |
|---|---|---|
| 1952-57 | 4.4 | 7.3 |
| 57-62 | 5.4 | 7.5 |
| 62-67 | 6.8 | 7.6 |
| 67-71 | 5.9 | 8.3 |
| 71-77 | 4.2 | 7.0 |
| 77-80 | 3.4 | 10.2 |
| 80-84 * | 7.9 | 9.8 |
| 84-89 | 8.1 | 11.4 |
| 89-91 | 5.3 | 9.7 |
| 1991-** | 7.2 | 15.5 |
| 1996 | 7.2 | 9.0 |

Source: Fact File, Seminar 457, September 1997.

30 According to one analysis, women had more of a presence in political office in the years of the `Congress dominance'.

31 Chandrika Parmar, "Factfile 1952-1997", *Seminar* No.457, September 1997.

Table 9.6. Women in State Legislatures 1952-1997 (% Women MLAs)

| State | Year | | | | | | | | | | State Avg.. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 52** | 57 | 60-‘65 | 67-69 | 70-75 | 77-78 | 79-83 | 84-88 | 89-92 | 93-97 | |
| A.Pradesh | 2.9 | 3.7 | 3.3 | 3.8 | 9.1 | 3.4 | 4.1 | 3.4 | 3.7 | 2.7 | 4.0 |
| Arunachal | - | - | - | - | - | 0.0 | 3.3 | 6.7 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.3 |
| Assam | 0.5 | 4.6 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 7.0 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 4.6 | 4.0 | 4.8 | 3.2 |
| Bihar | 3.6 | 9.4 | 7.9 | 2.2 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 3.7 | 4.6 | 2.8 | 3.4 | 4.3 |
| Goa | - | - | - | 6.7 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.0 | 10. | 4.3 |
| Gujarat | - | - | 6.4 | 4.8 | 3.2 | NE | 2.7 | 8.8 | 2.2 | 1.1 | 4.2 |
| Haryana | - | - | - | 7.4 | 6.2 | 4.4 | 7.8 | 5.6 | 6.7 | 4.4 | 6.2 |
| H.Pradesh | 0.0 | - | - | 0.0 | 5.9 | 1.5 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 5.9 | 4.4 | 3.6 |
| J & K | - | NE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.3 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 1.3 | NE | 2.3 | 1.5 |
| Karnataka | 2.0 | 8.7 | 8.7 | 3.2 | 5.1 | 4.0 | 0.9 | 3.6 | 4.5 | 3.1 | 4.5 |
| Kerala | 0.0 | 4.8 | 3.9* | 0.8 | 1.5 | 0.7 | 3.2 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 9.3 | 3.6 |
| M. Pradesh | 2.1 | 10. | 4.9* | 3.4 | 5.4 | 3.1 | 5.6 | 9.7 | 3.4 | 3.8 | 5.1 |
| Maharashtra | 1.9 | 6.3 | 4.9 | 3.3 | 9.3 | 2.8 | 6.6 | 5.6 | 2.1 | 3.8 | 4.7 |
| Manipur | - | NE | NE | 0.0 | 0.0 | NE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 0.3 |
| Meghalaya | - | - | - | - | 1.7 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 3.3 | NE | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| Mizoram | - | - | - | - | 0.0 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 2.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.4 |
| Nagaland | - | - | 0.0 | 0.0 | NE | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.5 |
| Orissa | 9.6 | 3.6 | 1.4 | 3.6 | 1.4 | 4.8 | 3.4 | 6.1 | 4.8 | 5.4 | 4.0 |
| Punjab | 2.2 | 5.8 | 5.2 | 1.0 | 5.8 | 2.6 | 5.1 | 3.4 | 5.1 | 6.0 | 4.0 |
| Rajasthan | 0.0 | 5.1 | 4.5 | 3.3 | 7.1 | 4.0 | 5.0 | 8.0 | 5.5 | 4.5 | 4.8 |
| Sikkim | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.3 | 3.1 | 4.3 |
| Tamil Nadu | 0.3 | 5.9 | 3.9 | 1.7 | 2.1 | 0.9 | 2.1 | 3.4 | 9.0 | 3.8 | 3.6 |
| Tripura | - | NE | NE | 0.0 | 3.3 | 1.7 | 6.7 | 3.3 | NE | 1.7 | 3.0 |
| U.P. | 1.2 | 5.8 | 4.4 | 2.8 | 5.9 | 2.6 | 5.6 | 7.3 | 3.3 | 4.0 | 4.1 |
| W.B. | 0.8 | 3.6 | 4.8 | 2.9 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 2.4 | 4.4 | 7.1 | 6.8 | 3.4 |
| Delhi | 4.2 | - | NE | NE | 7.1 | 7.1 | 7.1 | NE | NE | 4.3 | 5.1 |
| Pondicherry | - | - | 6.7 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 1.7 | 3.3 | 2.6 |
| Period Av. | 1.8 | 6.3 | 4.9 | 2.9 | 4.4 | 2.8 | 3.8 | 5.3 | 4.5 | 4.0 | 4.0 |

Notes: Table entry stands for % of women MLAs elected to state legislatures in the relevant elections.
-: States did not exist; NE No elections held in that year/period; *: Two elections held during this period. The figure given here is an average of the two; **: In 1952 the Election Commission did not recognise women as a separate category. The figures given here are based on name recognition and hence liable to under-reporting of women representatives.
Source: CSDS Data Unit. Quoted in Seminar, No.457, September 1997.

## B. *Women in the Decision Making Bodies of Political Parties*

Even in the decision-making bodies of political parties, the representation of women is dismal (Table 9.7).

## Table 9.7. Women's in Top Decision-Making Committees, India

| Party | Committee | Representation | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No. of Women | Total Members | % of Women |
| CPI(M) | Politburo | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| | Central Committee | 5 | 70 | 7 |
| CPI | Secretariat | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| | National Executive | 3 | 31 | 10 |
| | National Council | 6-7* | 125 | 5 |
| JD | Political Affairs | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| | Committee | 0** | 15 | 0 |
| | | 11 | 75 | 15 |
| UF | Steering Committee | 0 | 15-17*** | 0 |
| BJP | Parliamentary | 1 | 9 | 11 |
| | Board | 2 | 17 | 12 |
| | Election Committee | | | |
| Congress | Working Committee | 2 | 19 | 11 |

* The seventh member is a candidate member who participates in discussions but does not vote.

** Normally the state President of the JD women's wing is invited to attend and offer suggestions, but she does not have a vote. Even this invitation depends upon the wishes of the party President or of the President of the Parliamentary Board.

*** Total number of members vary due to visitors.

Source: Manushi (96), September-October 1996, n.27. Quoted in Seminar, No.457, September 1997.

## *C. Women in Administrative Positions*

Even though a few eminent women have occupied important positions in the administrative machinery, the overall representation of women in the Civil Services has been poor. In 1971, women constituted a mere 2.51 of the Central Government employees. By 1991, their representation had increased very marginally to 7.58% (table 9.8). Women's representation in the Indian Administrative Service and Indian Police Service cadres has similarly been dismal (table 9.9).

Table 9.8. Women in the Civil Services, 1971-1991.

| Year | % of Women to Total no. of Employees |
|---|---|
| 1971 | 2.51 |
| 1972 | 2.58 |
| 1973 | 2.55 |
| 1974 | 2.76 |
| 1975 | 2.83 |
| 1976 | 3.26 |
| 1977 | 3.30 |
| 1978 | 3.38 |
| 1980 | 3.53 |
| 1981 | 3.64 |
| 1982 | 3.80 |
| 1983 | 3.86 |
| 1984 | 3.93 |
| 1988 | 6.46 |
| 1989 | 6.60 |
| 1990 | 7.52 |
| 1991 | 7.58 |

Source: Directorate General of Employment and Training, Ministry of Labour, GOI.

Table 9.9. Percentage of Women in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS), 1987 & 1992

| ype of Service | Year | |
|---|---|---|
| | 1987 | 1992 |
| Indian Administrative Service (IAS) | 7.5 | 8.9 |
| Indian Police Service (IPS) | 0.9 | 0.01 |

## D. *Women's Access to Employment*

Women constitute about a fourth of the work force in India. They have a significant presence in the formal sector and have more of a presence in theinformal sector. They constitute about 16% of the employed in the organised sector. There is a sharp inter –state variation in this regard, ranging from 7.2% in Bihar to 35.2% in Kerala (table 9.10).

## E. *Women in Collective Groups*

There are indications that collective action by women have led to success stories. To cite two cases in point, the collective movements under the banner *Nisa Band* (Prohibition) and *Meira Paibi* (Torch Bearer) in the North East have been effective in campaigning against alcohol, trafficking in drugs and other anti-social activities such as theft and gambling. The *Meira Paibi* have guarded groups of families at night, and sometimes imposed a fine on the sale and consumption of liquor. At other times, they have gathered at police stations to mobilise for the release of person who they felt had been arrested without reason.

## F. *Women in Panchayati Raj*

The reservation of 33.3 per cent of seats in *Panchayati Raj* Institutions under the 73rd Amendment of 1992 in the general as well as the SC and ST categories has brought in a new dynamism in the local leadership. Some states like Karnataka and West Bengal have allotted even higher quotas for women than those stipulated by law. Women in leadership positions have pushed the local political discourse in the direction of social reforms. All-women *panchayats* before and after 1992 have been spread across different States: Mathupalli, Kurnool district and Gandhinagaram, Warrangal district in Andhra Pradesh; Vanjara in Maharashtra; Pidghara, Dhar district in Madhya Pradesh, Kultikri, Midnapur district in West Bengal, Mirza in Tripura, Prem Khera, Karnal district in Haryana and Bhinu Khurd, Ahmadnagar district, in Maharashtra. A field study of several States concludes that "The growing self-confidence, increasing commitment, firm determination to learn, the self-conscious pride as movers of the community and the consciousness that they are here as agents of socio-political changes, are writ large on the elected women's faces…"[32]

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32 Susheela Kaushik, "Women in *Panchayat* Elections", in S.N. Jha and P.C. Mathur (eds.), *Decentralisation and Local Politics*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1999, p.247.

Table 9.10. Women's Employment in the Organised Sector, States of India, 1996

| State / Union Territory | % Women Employment to Total Employment |
|---|---|
| Andhra Pradesh | 15.1 |
| Assam | 29.7 |
| Bihar | 7.2 |
| Goa | 20.6 |
| Gujarat | 12.9 |
| Haryana | 12.4 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 13.0 |
| Jammu &Kashmir | 10.7 |
| Karnataka | 26.9 |
| Kerala | 35.2 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 10.9 |
| Maharashtra | 14.2 |
| Manipur | 20.3 |
| Meghalaya | 22.2 |
| Mizoram | 24.4 |
| Nagaland | 16.4 |
| Orissa | 10.4 |
| Punjab | 14.1 |
| Rajasthan | 13.0 |
| Tamil Nadu | 25.8 |
| Tripura | 20.0 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 8.8 |
| West Bengal | 9.3 |

Source : Directorate General of Employment, Ministry of Labour, Government of India

EXTRA – UNUSED

The reasons for female deprivation in education are varied. Demand side factors include poverty and the anticipation of discrimination of women in the job market, while supply factors affecting the social attitude towards women's education include distant location of schools, inflexible school timings, gender insensitive curricula and the lack of female teachers.

# Chapter 10

# Conflict & Violence

Violence can occur in both the public as well as the private domains. In the public domain, acts of violence have taken specific forms like caste and class violence, communal violence, criminal violence, sexual violence, and ethnic violence. Violence in the private domain include violence in marital life, criminal acts, incidents of suicide, and crimes of personal rivalry and jealousy, even by individuals without any criminal record. While private violence may fall within the larger public domain, the forms they assume are distinctly different and so are the ways in which the two domains of violence are handled by the authorities entrusted with the maintenance of law and order. In this chapter, we will take a look at violence mainly in the public domain, and also, briefly, in the private one.

Indian society has witnessed a significant level of violence in the public sphere. It is noteworthy also that the *types* of violence vary across States. While U.P. was marked by communal violence, "Bihar was characterised by an increasing growth of crime and the activity of organised criminal groups …'. In some States like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh, there are volatile pockets controlled by extremist groups like the PWG and MCC.

There are indications also that violence in the public domain has been on the rise. Data show that between 1955 and 1999, riots per million population increased, at the all India level, and, more sharply, in States like Erstwhile Bihar and West Bengal (see figure).

## Caste Violence

Caste violence in modern India has taken the form of either violence perpetuated by the high castes against the low castes, or it has been low-caste initiated violence against the upper castes. Instances of the former include the Bathani Tola massacre in the Bhojpur district of Central Bihar in 1996, the killings of the *dalits* by the *lingayats* in Karnataka, and the killing of, according to one official estimate, 28 *dalits* in Uttar Pradesh, in 1991, between July and January.

The desire to hang on to the 'old' social order has been the source of much caste conflict. Various armies or *senas* of the landed castes have come into existence in a desperate bid to preserve the 'feudal' fabric. In this context, high caste violence may be understood in terms the refusal of the `traditionalists' to come to terms with the ground realities of social change. The persistence of age old, discriminatory and oppressive caste relations in Indian society has to a certain extent been exacerbated by the police force, particularly their proximity to the higher castes. Cases of police torture of *dalits* are not unheard of. In most cases, it is reported that the police and administration have links with the dominant castes.

Caste violence has been experienced also in areas where low castes (*dalits*) have challenged the treatment meted out to them over the centuries. The assertiveness on part of the low caste communities have been the result not just of centuries of oppression but also, their mobilisation arising from economic upliftment of certain sections among them. Certain sections of the *dalit* community in the Southern States have become financially strong, as a result of the money from the Gulf and economic strength has given them the confidence to shake off traditional domination. Further, the emergence of political organisations among the low castes has helped them acquire a platform to voice their distress.

# Agrarian Unrest

The early instances of agrarian unrest took the form of confrontations between the landowning classes and the landless peasantry, and involved the forcible occupation of land, non-payment of rent, and the looting of grains. Incidents such as these were reported from the States of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam and Bihar. Later conflicts occurred in the middle and lower strata of the traditional caste hierarchy and/or between these groups and the SCs and the STs. Such incidents reported from Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat have been more severe and intense, often with the involvement of groups of the extreme left and the private armies or *senas*, as in Bihar. Erosion of the traditional elite groups, resurgence of the `backward' castes[1] and the marginal gains of `reservations' (real or perceived) for the SCs and the STs have been identified as underlying causes. At the roots of agrarian unrest, therefore, there are socioeconomic factors. Several studies on agrarian unrest have, in fact, gone into the underlying socio-economic roots.[2]

# Communal Violence

Time and again, communal violence in India has threatened to tear apart the social fabric. In one of the worst communal riots in the country, in Bhagalpur, in October-November, 1989, a thousand people were killed.[3] A few years later, severe communal violence broke out in several parts of the country in the wake of the demolition of the *Babri Masjid* on December 6, 1992.

Overall, the trend in communal incidents shows a pattern. `Following the great convulsions which accompanied the Partition, the trend throughout the 1950s was one of steady decline. In the 1960s, there was first, a sharp spurt in 1964, followed by a dip, and then another upsurge which lasted from 1969

1 Francine Frankel, M.S.A. Rao, (eds.), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India*, Oxford University Press, 1990-91.

2 Government of India, *Report of the Central Team on the Extremist Areas in Bihar*, Occasional Paper, New Delhi, Department of Rural Development, 1988; Tilak D. Gupta, "Caste Complications in Agrarian Conflict", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVII, no.18, 1992; Amaresh Misra, "Land Struggles in Uttar Pradesh", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII, no.39, 1993; C. Chandramohan, "Political Economy of Agrarian Conflict in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXXIII, no.41, 1998.

3 Charu Gupta and Mukul Sharma, Communal Construction Media Reality Vs Real Reality, *Race and Class*, 38,1, 1996 p.5.

until about 1972. Thereafter, the rate remained at relatively low levels almost up to the end of the decade'. In the 1980s, there was once again, an increase, which accelerated sharply from 1986 until about 1994.[4] According to one estimate, the number of people killed in the communal riots in the 1980s was almost four times higher than that of the 1970s.[5]

While the Hindu-Muslim religious antagonism has a historical past, the instances of Hindu-Muslim riots cannot be explained solely in terms of cultural and historical factors. A close look at the riots in Moradabad (1980), Bhiwandi (1984), Malegaon (1982), Biharsharif (1981), Belgaum (1984), and Ahmedabad (1985-86) show distinctly varied reasons for enmity between the two communities.[6] In Moradabad, for example, where brassware is the primary industry, the main underlying cause was the competition between Hindu and Muslim businessmen along economic lines. While the artisans in Moradabad are mostly Muslims, the Hindus primarily control the trade. Moreover, it was commonly believed that the Muslims who took to the export business were preferred by importing Muslim countries. This had become a source of much resentment in the area. It was also alleged that the Muslims were over-invoicing the exports and were being paid more than a legitimate price. In Bhivandi, Maharashtra, again the Hindus and Muslims, who had resided together in harmony for centuries, turned against each other as a result of problems which may be traced to day-to-day living, civic amenities, and economic relations.

The levels of employment of Hindus and the Muslims have also being source of much contention between the two communities. Some striking differences that are emphasised are the microscopic representation of the Muslims in the elite professions of the country like the IAS, IPS, the public sector banks, and the Central services (table 10.1).

## Table 10.1. Percentage Share of Muslims in Employment, 1981

| Employment Category | | % Muslims |
|---|---|---|
| Administration | IAS Officers | 2.99 |
| | IPS Officers | 2.85 |
| Bank Employees | | 2.85 |
| Public Sector Undertakings | Directors | 4.2 |
| | Senior Officers | 2.32 |
| Judiciary | | 6.19 |

Source : Statistics reported in P.R. Rajagopal, *Communal Violence in India*, New Delhi, Uppal Publishing House, 1989.

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4 Peiris, *op.*cit., p.23.

5 Mushirul Hasan, "In Search of Integration and Identity: Indian Muslims since Independence", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXIII, nos.45-47, 1988.

6 P.R. Rajagopal, *Communal Violence in India*, New Delhi, Uppal Publishing House, 1989.

One analysis of communal riots concludes that they have been used as occasions to give expression to the inner unexpressed anger of individuals and groups. The primary cause of such anger is the `lack of work' and socio-economic deprivation; `every riot sharpens the separate identity of communal groups and particularly the identity of the minority groups'.[7] Studies of Hindu-Muslim confrontations suggest that they have roots in situations where there is a decline in the economic condition of the `sizeable native' Muslim population established in long standing occupations in crafts and trades.[8] Certain areas where Muslims have achieved "a measure of economic stability and improvement in living conditions", (e.g.), Ahmedabad, Meerut, Aligarh, Varanasi, Bhiwandi and Kanpur), have also experienced communal riots[9] in a context where Hindu and Muslim groups in severe competition and sharing deprivations are involved in situations of conflict.

Apart from the religious and cultural differences, factors that trigger tension between the communities include insecurity among the Muslim owing to poor levels of education and socio-economic development. While NSS figures of per capita expenditure (Table 10.2) show a near parity between the Hindus and Muslims in the rural areas, studies indicate `a clear distinct concentration in the lower strata in the case of urban Muslims'. Studies also show that the Muslims are concentrated in lower income occupations.

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7 Ibid.

8 Asghar Ali Engineer, "An Analytical Study of the Meerut Riot" in *Communal Riots in Post-Independence India*, A.A. Engineer (ed.), Bombay, Sangam, 1984; "Making of the Hyderabad Riot", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVI, no.6, 1991, pp.271-74; "Sitamarhi on Fire", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVII, no.46, 1992, pp.2462-2464; "Bastion of Communal Amity Crumbles", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII, no.7, 1993, pp.262-64; "Aligarh Riots: Unplanned Outburst", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol., no.13, 1995, pp.665-667; Sudhir Chandra, "Of Communal Consciousness and Communal Violence: Impressions from Post-Riot Surat", E*conomic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII, no.36, 1993, pp.1883-1887; Shail Mayaram, "Communal Violence in Jaipur", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII nos.46-47, 1993, pp.2524-2541; Jan Breman, "Anti-Muslim Pogrom in Surat", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII, no.16, 1993, pp.737-741; Roger Jeffery and Patricia M. Jeffery, "The Bijnor Riots, October 1990: Collapse of the Mythical Special Relationship", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXIC, no.10, 1994, pp.551-58; Ishita Mukhopadhyaya, "Urban Informal Sector and Communal Violence: A Case Study of 1992 Riots in Calcutta", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXIX, no.35, 1994, pp.2299-2302.

9 Hasan, *op.cit.* 1988; Asghar Ali Engineer, "Communal Violence in Kanpur", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXIX no.9, 1994, pp.473-74.

Table 10.2. Sectoral Classification of Hindus and Muslims on the Basis of Per Capita Expenditure, 1987-88.

| | Monthly Expenditure Strata (Rs./per cap) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Community | Percentage in each expenditure stratum | | | |
| | | < 80 | 80 to 110 | 110 to 160 | >160 |
| Rural | Hindu | 13.7 | 22.8 | 31.3 | 30.6 |
| | Muslim | 12.0 | 23.1 | 33.6 | 30.6 |
| | Christian | 12.5 | 15.7 | 27.1 | 43.2 |
| | Other | 9.6 | 12.7 | 26.4 | 46.7 |
| Urban | Hindu | 13.1 | 22.5 | 41.2 | 22.5 |
| | Muslim | 22.0 | 31.3 | 35.6 | 10.7 |
| | Christian | 11.0 | 17.2 | 33.4 | 35.5 |
| | Other | 11.7 | 15.2 | 38.1 | 34.0 |

Source: Abusaleh Shariff, `Socio- Economic & Demographic Differentials between Hindus & Muslims in India', Economic & Political Weekly, XXX (46), 1995, tables 8,9.

# Criminal Violence

Violence in general is on the rise in India, with reported crime itself showing a huge percentage increase. The criminalisation of politics is an important contributor. Electoral power play is a money game which uses force and violence. When parties lack well-knit organisation and cadre, they resort to money power and muscle power, taking the help of criminals to mobilise the people. In fact, several of the elected members to the legislatures have criminal records.

A review of the crime situation in India shows certain significant trends.[10]

- ☑ Of the total crimes committed in India annually, a sizeable number includes cognizable crimes under IPC (including theft burglary, robbery, dacoity, murder, riot, and kidnapping, cheating, breach of trust…). A still higher percentage of crime occur in the form of offences under local and special laws (like Motor Vehicle Act, prohibition Act, Gambling Act, Excise Act Arms Act, Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, Opium Act, Railway Act, Explosive Substance Act, and so on).
- ☑ Out of the total cases handled by the police each year, about 30% are cognizable crimes while 70% are cases of offence under local and special laws.
- ☑ Of the total cognizable crimes, about one third are economic and property-related crimes of theft, burglary, robbery, and dacoity.
- ☑ The crime rate is higher for males than females.
- ☑ The ratio of urban offenders is much less than the rural offenders.
- ☑ The crime rate is the highest for those in the lowest socio-economic group.
- ☑ Organised crime is increasing with the growth of larger-scale Mafia organisations.

# Violence against Women

Violence against women occurs at both levels, the public and the private. Women may also be victims of general crimes like murder, robbery, and cheating.

Crimes identified under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) include Rape (Section 376 IPC); Kidnapping and Abduction for different purposes (Section 363-373 IPC); Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Section 302/304. B-IPC); Torture, both mental and physical (Section 498-A IPC); Molestation (Section 354 IPC); Sexual Harassment (Section 509 IPC ); and Importation of girls (upto 21years of age) (Section 366-B- IPC).

Crimes identified under special laws are with reference to social customs and practices. They are identified as cognizable offences, punishable under the law. These special enactments to safeguard the interests of women are: Sati (Prevention) Act 1987; Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956; and Indecent Representation of Women (Prevention), Act, 1986.[11]

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10 Ram Ahuja, *Social Problems in India*, Jaipur, Pawar Publications, 1992.

11 Malvika Karlekar et al., No Safe Spaces...Report of a Workshop on Violence Against Women, New Delhi, CWDS, 1995.

# Factors in Violence : An Overview

## *Historical*

Communal violence can be easily traced to differences between religious communities in the past. `Maltreatment' in the past is sought to be avenged through violent acts in the present. Violence by lower castes and backward sections of society has similar colorings. A history of humiliation and misery is sought to be avenged by violence against the present generation of the `perpetrators'.

## *Economic*

Many subversive groups find fertile soil in the fact that many regions and social groups in the country have remained untouched by the programmes and processes of development.

Violence is often chosen as the shortest means of conflict resolution. Yet, "While persistent poverty and the resulting deprivations could certainly contribute to the creation and/or the intensification of conflict, violent political conflict has hardly ever been an inevitable outcome of poverty".[12] The Punjab was a case of `conflict with development'. Uttar Pradesh, which has highest poverty figures and is low on development indicators has had a lower incidence of conflicts as compared to other States in that category, e.g., Bihar, Assam, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. In the North East, Mizoram, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh are almost on par with respect to development indicators, but Arunachal Pradesh has been comparatively peaceful.

*Within* States too we find variations. The *naxalite* `convulsions' in West Bengal in the 1960s was limited to three regions within the Darjeeling district; and the Darjeeling region has a markedly better economic performance compared to other regions in the State. Disturbances in the Punjab in the 1980s were much more in Amritsar and Gurdaspur than in the districts of Ludhiana, Sangrur, Bhatinda and Patiala in the Malwa Belt. Caste based rural violence in Bihar has been concentrated in the districts of Bhojpur, Rural Patna, Nalanda, Gaya, Aurangabad, Jehanabad and Nawadah. The districts in North Bihar, where poverty is more intense, have been almost free from violence on that scale. The Bodoland belt, north of the river Brahmaputra, which has been a violence prone area, has better living standards compared to other areas in Assam.

## *Poverty and Unemployment*

Crimes are also caused by sheer distress and misery, which drives some to criminal and violent acts. Unemployment among the educated is also an important factor in violence today. Frustration with their life situations lead people to take out their anger through violent acts.

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12 G.H. Peiris, "Poverty, Development and Inter-Group Conflict in South Asia: Covariance and Causal Connections", *Ethnic Studies Report*, vol.XVIII, no.1, January 2000, p.19.

## *Cultural Transition*

Fast and vast changes in certain sections of Indian society have led to situations of a culture lag. Urban India has been a victim of violence caused by the influence of cultural factors where changes are not total but partial. A new variety of crimes have begun in India, which may be attributed to the gap in Indian cultural transitions. A significant part of this development has been the attendant problem of loss of social values. Violence as in rape, abduction, homicide, mindless killing, especially in the cities, may be directly related to a lack of values, especially among the young and some not so young.

## *Political Factors*

The politicisation of social issues also leads to violence. Issues are used politically and politics becomes an important factor to which much violence may be attributed.

## *Radical Ideology*

Ideology-driven organisations, political or otherwise, have also been the source of much violence in India. Groups like the *naxalites* have often, in the process of protesting against the repressive social order, resorted to violence.

## *Anomie*

Loss of values and the resulting violence has been the source of considerable concern in India. A very clear indicator of the growth of frustrating conditions is the increasing incidence of suicide in the country. While the suicide rate in India was 7-9 persons per 100,000 in 1971, it grew to 9.5 persons per 100,000 in 1996. This is a serious issue, especially with the suicide rate for men as high as 10.6 persons per 100,000. Conditions of anomie result from disturbances in society caused by poverty, unemployment, lack of social justice and similar social evils. Frustration arising out of daily life conditions drives people to suicide and other kinds of violence.

For 1955-1982, Atul Kohli, Democracy & Discontent, Cambridge University Press, 1990; for 1883-85, Statistical Abstracts of India. For an analysis of the earlier periods, see, K.S. Subramanian, *Political Violence, Social Movements and the State in India,* IDS Discussion Paper No.308, August 1992.

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16 Peiris, *op*.cit., p.23.
17 Mushirul Hasan, "In Search of Integration and Identity: Indian Muslims since Independence", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXIII, nos.45-47, 1988.
18 P.R. Rajagopal, *Communal Violence in India*, New Delhi, Uppal Publishing House, 1989.

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19 Ibid.

20 Asghar Ali Engineer, "An Analytical Study of the Meerut Riot" in *Communal Riots in Post-Independence India*, A.A. Engineer (ed.), Bombay, Sangam, 1984; "Making of the Hyderabad Riot", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVI, no.6, 1991, pp.271-74; "Sitamarhi on Fire", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVII, no.46, 1992, pp.2462-2464; "Bastion of Communal Amity Crumbles", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII, no.7, 1993, pp.262-64; "Aligarh Riots: Unplanned Outburst", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol., no.13, 1995, pp.665-667; Sudhir Chandra, "Of Communal Consciousness and Communal Violence: Impressions from Post-Riot Surat", E*conomic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII, no.36, 1993, pp.1883-1887; Shail Mayaram, "Communal Violence in Jaipur", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII nos.46-47, 1993, pp.2524-2541; Jan Breman, "Anti-Muslim Pogrom in Surat", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII, no.16, 1993, pp.737-741; Roger Jeffery and Patricia M. Jeffery, "The Bijnor Riots, October 1990: Collapse of the Mythical Special Relationship", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXIC, no.10, 1994, pp.551-58; Ishita Mukhopadhyaya, "Urban Informal Sector and Communal Violence: A Case Study of 1992 Riots in Calcutta", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXIX, no.35, 1994, pp.2299-2302.

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22 Ram Ahuja, *Social Problems in India*, Jaipur, Pawar Publications, 1992.

23 Malvika Karlekar et al., No Safe Spaces...Report of a Workshop on Violence Against Women, New Delhi, CWDS, 1995.

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Many subversive groups find fertile soil in the fact that many regions and social groups in the country have remained untouched by the programmes and processes of development.

Violence is often chosen as the shortest means of conflict resolution. Yet, "While persistent poverty and the resulting deprivations could certainly contribute to the creation and/or the intensification of conflict, violent political conflict has hardly ever been an inevitable outcome of poverty".[24] The Punjab was a case of `conflict with development'. Uttar Pradesh, which has highest poverty figures and is low on development indicators has had a lower incidence of conflicts as compared to other States in that category, e.g., Bihar, Assam, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. In the North East, Mizoram, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh are almost on par with respect to development indicators, but Arunachal Pradesh has been comparatively peaceful.

*Within* States too we find variations. The *naxalite* `convulsions' in West Bengal in the 1960s was limited to three regions within the Darjeeling district; and the Darjeeling region has a markedly better economic performance compared to other regions in the State. Disturbances in the Punjab in the 1980s were much more in Amritsar and Gurdaspur than in the districts of Ludhiana, Sangrur, Bhatinda and Patiala in the Malwa Belt. Caste based rural violence in Bihar has been concentrated in the districts of Bhojpur, Rural Patna, Nalanda, Gaya, Aurangabad, Jehanabad and Nawadah. The districts in North Bihar, where poverty is more intense, have been almost free from violence on that scale. The Bodoland belt, north of the river Brahmaputra, which has been a violence prone area, has better living standards compared to other areas in Assam.

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Crimes are also caused by sheer distress and misery, which drives some to criminal and violent acts. Unemployment among the educated is also an important factor in violence today. Frustration with their life situations lead people to take out their anger through violent acts.

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[24] G.H. Peiris, "Poverty, Development and Inter-Group Conflict in South Asia: Covariance and Causal Connections", *Ethnic Studies Report*, vol.XVIII, no.1, January 2000, p.19.

## *Cultural Transition*

Fast and vast changes in certain sections of Indian society have led to situations of a culture lag. Urban India has been a victim of violence caused by the influence of cultural factors where changes are not total but partial. A new variety of crimes have begun in India, which may be attributed to the gap in Indian cultural transitions. A significant part of this development has been the attendant problem of loss of social values. Violence as in rape, abduction, homicide, mindless killing, especially in the cities, may be directly related to a lack of values, especially among the young and some not so young.

## *Political Factors*

The politicisation of social issues also leads to violence. Issues are used politically and politics becomes an important factor to which much violence may be attributed.

## *Radical Ideology*

Ideology-driven organisations, political or otherwise, have also been the source of much violence in India. Groups like the *naxalites* have often, in the process of protesting against the repressive social order, resorted to violence.

## *Anomie*

Loss of values and the resulting violence has been the source of considerable concern in India. A very clear indicator of the growth of frustrating conditions is the increasing incidence of suicide in the country. While the suicide rate in India was 7-9 persons per 100,000 in 1971, it grew to 9.5 persons per 100,000 in 1996. This is a serious issue, especially with the suicide rate for men as high as 10.6 persons per 100,000. Conditions of anomie result from disturbances in society caused by poverty, unemployment, lack of social justice and similar social evils. Frustration arising out of daily life conditions drives people to suicide and other kinds of violence.

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Caste violence has been experienced also in areas where low castes (*dalits*) have challenged the treatment meted out to them over the centuries. The assertiveness on part of the low caste communities have been the result not just of centuries of oppression but also, their mobilisation arising from economic upliftment of certain sections among them. Certain sections of the *dalit* community in the Southern States have become financially strong, as a result of the money from the Gulf and economic strength has given them the confidence to shake off traditional domination. Further, the emergence of political organisations among the low castes has helped them acquire a platform to voice their distress.

# Agrarian Unrest

The early instances of agrarian unrest took the form of confrontations between the landowning classes and the landless peasantry, and involved the forcible occupation of land, non-payment of rent, and the looting of grains. Incidents such as these were reported from the States of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam and Bihar. Later conflicts occurred in the middle and lower strata of the traditional caste hierarchy and/or between these groups and the SCs and the STs. Such incidents reported from Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat have been more severe and intense, often with the involvement of groups of the extreme left and the private armies or *senas*, as in Bihar. Erosion of the traditional elite groups, resurgence of the `backward' castes[1] and the marginal gains of `reservations' (real or perceived) for the SCs and the STs have been identified as underlying causes. At the roots of agrarian unrest, therefore, there are socioeconomic factors. Several studies on agrarian unrest have, in fact, gone into the underlying socio-economic roots.[2]

# Communal Violence

Time and again, communal violence in India has threatened to tear apart the social fabric. In one of the worst communal riots in the country, in Bhagalpur, in October-November, 1989, a thousand people were killed.[3] A few years later, severe communal violence broke out in several parts of the country in the wake of the demolition of the *Babri Masjid* on December 6, 1992.

Overall, the trend in communal incidents shows a pattern. `Following the great convulsions which accompanied the Partition, the trend throughout the 1950s was one of steady decline. In the 1960s, there was first, a sharp spurt in 1964, followed by a dip, and then another upsurge which lasted from 1969

1 Francine Frankel, M.S.A. Rao, (eds.), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India*, Oxford University Press, 1990-91.

2 Government of India, *Report of the Central Team on the Extremist Areas in Bihar*, Occasional Paper, New Delhi, Department of Rural Development, 1988; Tilak D. Gupta, "Caste Complications in Agrarian Conflict", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVII, no.18, 1992; Amaresh Misra, "Land Struggles in Uttar Pradesh", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII, no.39, 1993; C. Chandramohan, "Political Economy of Agrarian Conflict in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXXIII, no.41, 1998.

3 Charu Gupta and Mukul Sharma, Communal Construction Media Reality Vs Real Reality, *Race and Class*, 38,1, 1996 p.5.

until about 1972. Thereafter, the rate remained at relatively low levels almost up to the end of the decade'. In the 1980s, there was once again, an increase, which accelerated sharply from 1986 until about 1994.[4] According to one estimate, the number of people killed in the communal riots in the 1980s was almost four times higher than that of the 1970s.[5]

While the Hindu-Muslim religious antagonism has a historical past, the instances of Hindu-Muslim riots cannot be explained solely in terms of cultural and historical factors. A close look at the riots in Moradabad (1980), Bhiwandi (1984), Malegaon (1982), Biharsharif (1981), Belgaum (1984), and Ahmedabad (1985-86) show distinctly varied reasons for enmity between the two communities.[6] In Moradabad, for example, where brassware is the primary industry, the main underlying cause was the competition between Hindu and Muslim businessmen along economic lines. While the artisans in Moradabad are mostly Muslims, the Hindus primarily control the trade. Moreover, it was commonly believed that the Muslims who took to the export business were preferred by importing Muslim countries. This had become a source of much resentment in the area. It was also alleged that the Muslims were over-invoicing the exports and were being paid more than a legitimate price. In Bhivandi, Maharashtra, again the Hindus and Muslims, who had resided together in harmony for centuries, turned against each other as a result of problems which may be traced to day-to-day living, civic amenities, and economic relations.

The levels of employment of Hindus and the Muslims have also being source of much contention between the two communities. Some striking differences that are emphasised are the microscopic representation of the Muslims in the elite professions of the country like the IAS, IPS, the public sector banks, and the Central services (table 10.1).

## Table 10.1. Percentage Share of Muslims in Employment, 1981

| Employment Category | | % Muslims |
|---|---|---|
| Administration | IAS Officers | 2.99 |
| | IPS Officers | 2.85 |
| Bank Employees | | 2.85 |
| Public Sector Undertakings | Directors | 4.2 |
| | Senior Officers | 2.32 |
| Judiciary | | 6.19 |

Source : Statistics reported in P.R. Rajagopal, *Communal Violence in India*, New Delhi, Uppal Publishing House, 1989.

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4 Peiris, *op*.cit., p.23.

5 Mushirul Hasan, "In Search of Integration and Identity: Indian Muslims since Independence", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXIII, nos.45-47, 1988.

6 P.R. Rajagopal, *Communal Violence in India*, New Delhi, Uppal Publishing House, 1989.

One analysis of communal riots concludes that they have been used as occasions to give expression to the inner unexpressed anger of individuals and groups. The primary cause of such anger is the `lack of work' and socio-economic deprivation; `every riot sharpens the separate identity of communal groups and particularly the identity of the minority groups'.[7] Studies of Hindu-Muslim confrontations suggest that they have roots in situations where there is a decline in the economic condition of the `sizeable native' Muslim population established in long standing occupations in crafts and trades.[8] Certain areas where Muslims have achieved "a measure of economic stability and improvement in living conditions", (e.g.), Ahmedabad, Meerut, Aligarh, Varanasi, Bhiwandi and Kanpur), have also experienced communal riots[9] in a context where Hindu and Muslim groups in severe competition and sharing deprivations are involved in situations of conflict.

Apart from the religious and cultural differences, factors that trigger tension between the communities include insecurity among the Muslim owing to poor levels of education and socio-economic development. While NSS figures of per capita expenditure (Table 10.2) show a near parity between the Hindus and Muslims in the rural areas, studies indicate `a clear distinct concentration in the lower strata in the case of urban Muslims'. Studies also show that the Muslims are concentrated in lower income occupations.

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7 Ibid.

8 Asghar Ali Engineer, "An Analytical Study of the Meerut Riot" in *Communal Riots in Post-Independence India*, A.A. Engineer (ed.), Bombay, Sangam, 1984; "Making of the Hyderabad Riot", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVI, no.6, 1991, pp.271-74; "Sitamarhi on Fire", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVII, no.46, 1992, pp.2462-2464; "Bastion of Communal Amity Crumbles", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII, no.7, 1993, pp.262-64; "Aligarh Riots: Unplanned Outburst", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol., no.13, 1995, pp.665-667; Sudhir Chandra, "Of Communal Consciousness and Communal Violence: Impressions from Post-Riot Surat", E*conomic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII, no.36, 1993, pp.1883-1887; Shail Mayaram, "Communal Violence in Jaipur", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII nos.46-47, 1993, pp.2524-2541; Jan Breman, "Anti-Muslim Pogrom in Surat", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXVIII, no.16, 1993, pp.737-741; Roger Jeffery and Patricia M. Jeffery, "The Bijnor Riots, October 1990: Collapse of the Mythical Special Relationship", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXIC, no.10, 1994, pp.551-58; Ishita Mukhopadhyaya, "Urban Informal Sector and Communal Violence: A Case Study of 1992 Riots in Calcutta", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.XXIX, no.35, 1994, pp.2299-2302.

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# Chapter 11

## Institutions in Crisis

The model of development in India for about four decades after Independence required a State with 'high capacity' to plan for development and then effectively implement planned programmes. The policy of liberalisation initiated in a full-fledged manner in 1991-92 aimed to recast this interventionist paradigm so as to shrink the 'domain' of State activity and transfer much of it to `private' hands. The reforms carried out since, over the course of a decade, have given rise to a debate on the role of the State, especially in the social sector, and on the capacity of the State's institutions, in particular, those of governance.

Regardless of the model of development, effective State institutions are a must, and most failures have been institutional ones, be they problems of implementation of development programmes or of effectively pursuing the different aspects of the liberalisation policy. In the absence of institutional support, programmes and policies remain incomplete and unimplemented. The process of institutionalisation has, in fact, been for long emphasised in social science literature as a necessary aspect of social, political and economic process. Institution building is a long drawn out exercise and once the process of erosion take over an institutional structure, its reversal requires drastic measures that must be supported by strong will, political and administrative.

In India, the institutional crisis is understood in different ways. For some, it has to do with the 'transfer and transformation'[1] of institutions, where 'alien' institutions transplanted on Indian soil are congenitally unsuitable to Indian conditions. In this context, there were complaints about the absence of 'Indian-ness' in the Constituent Assembly when the suitability of the constitutional provisions was discussed. Others talk about the crisis as a 'design fault' where the institutions meant to serve certain functions are not 'appropriate' to the tasks they are supposed to handle. The suitability of the 'bureaueractic' model for performing developmental functions falls in this category. The solution to this lies in reforming, remoulding, reorienting and/or redesigning institutions.[2] The crisis is also discussed in terms of the 'demand stress' where the increasing pressures/ demands from society/economy prove to be a strain on the existing institutions. Such strains are faced by institutions in India as a result of the newly emergent social groups and the changing nature of their demands. While these are valid bases of arguments that are persuasively put forth, we have a rather simpler meaning of the crisis of institutions. What has happened to the institutions of governance is that they have allowed themselves to fall, in tune with the general

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1 Peter Lyons and James Manor, Eds. *Transfer and Transformations: Political Institutions in the New Commonwealth*, Leicester University Press, 1983.

2 Robert Goodin, (Ed). *The Theory of Institutional Design*, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

social, political and moral' decline, and have lost their identity. This has made inroads even into the most rationally organised institutions, disturbing the essential elements of these structures.

According to a credible 1996 survey, many of the public institutions in India are rated very low on the *Index of Popular Trust* (table 11.1). The low scores reflect poorly on the public perception that is important for the legitimacy of these institutions. One related issue that has come strongly into the public limelight is the politician-bureaucrat-criminal nexus. As the Vohra Committee Report of 1993 puts it, `the network of the Mafia is virtually running a parallel government pushing the State apparatus into irrelevance ... a powerful nexus between the bureaucracy and politicians with *Mafia* gangs, smugglers and the underworld..."[3]

# Politics & Governance

Yet, the balance sheet of the Indian State since Independence has much to commend it, especially in comparison to other third world countries. In the initial decades, institutions like the Congress Party, the civil services, the legal system, the parliamentary institutions and so on, provided a measure of stability.[4]

The first signs of cracks in the institutional framework became visible after 1967, when the Congress Party lost heavily in State elections. The decade that followed saw an incremental 'decline of institutions'[5] 'Deinstitutionalisation' became a recurrent theme in analyses of the Indian situation since the mid seventies; it started with the 'personalisation' and 'centralisation' of power in the Congress Party and in the political system,[6] and culminated in the Emergency in 1975. [7]

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3 Supreme Court of India Judgement, Vineet Narain vs. Union of India, December 18, 1997.

4 An earlier generation of India analysts had stressed this aspect: e.g., W.H. Morris-Jones, *The Government and Politics of India*, London, Hutchinson University Library, 1964.

5 Institutions, their roots, sources of their decline and other such issues have been subject of much analysis. e.g., Sudipta Kaviraj, `On the Crisis of Political Institutions in India'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, Vol.18, No.2, 1984; Partha Chatterji, The *Nation and Its Fragments*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1994, Satish Sabharwal, *Roots of Crisis: Interpreting Contemporary Indian Society*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1996.

6 For details see Max Zins, *Strains on Indian Democracy: Reflections India's Political and Institutional Crisis*, New Delhi, ABC Publishing House, 1988.

7 The 'use' and 'misuse' of State structures and institutions like the bureaucracy and the police are elaborated upon in the report of the Shah Commission.

Table 11.I. Indices of Popular Trust, Institutions in India, 1996

(Maximum Score 100 (1996)

| Institution | Score |
|---|---|
| Election Commission | 62 |
| State Government | 59 |
| Judiciary | 59 |
| Local self-government | 58 |
| Central government | 57 |
| Representatives | 40 |
| Political parties | 39 |
| Bureaucracy | 37 |
| Police | 28 |

Source: ICSSR- CSDS- India Today Poll, "The Maturing of a Democracy, *India Today*, 31 August 1996, p.40.

The phenomenon of fractured electoral verdicts, testimony to the absence of viable legislative majorities, saw coalition governments in the States in 1967, and in the Lok Sabha a decade later, with the 1977 election bringing in the first non-Congress and the first coalition government at the Centre. Fractured verdicts were to flower more fully in times to come. In the Indian political scene, the 90s are known for fractured electoral verdicts, 'hung' legislatures and desperately woven coalition governments pulled in different directions by the coalition partners. Even when governments have been in position, their legitimacy and effectiveness have been in question.

Indian politics since the 80s also saw movements in other directions - in society, social groupings and diverse movements at the grassroots, accompanied by changes in the 'traditional' authority structure in society.[8] This gave rise to 'coalitions' of new social groups, and a new political dynamic, which was evident

8 M.S.A. Rao, and Francine Frankel, (eds.), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of Social Order,* Vol.I and II, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990 and 1991.

in the shifts of the support base of political parties. The period was also characterised by demands for a new look at Centre-State relations,[9] regional autonomy[10] and regional assertions.[11] All these factors strengthened the local and 'localised' support to regional parties.[12] With the decline of the Congress Party, Indian politics moved towards increasing 'regionalisation' as evident in the change `from a dominant party system to a regionalised multi party system'.[13]

## *Coalitions, Regional & National*

`In most federal systems, State-based parties have historically preceded the development of powerful national parties. India has not, however, followed the beaten path, for historical and conjunctural reasons....[14] In India, the sequence of development has been different. With single party dominance at the Centre a thing of the past, the elections of the 90s showed an increase both in the share of votes and the share of parliamentary seats of regional parties. Of the national parties, only the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party could claim a tangible presence in the Lok Sabha, but even they were far from a majority adequate to form a government. Since 1989, only minority governments have been in position at the Centre. There have been six Prime Ministers in ten years. The government of V.P.Singh's National Front, formed with the support of both the Left Parties and BJP, was succeeded by the Samajwadi Janata Dal government, supported mainly by the Congress, with Chandra Shekhar as Prime Minister. The 1991 elections brought to power P.V. Narasimha Rao's minority government with support from a wide spectrum of parties. The United Front governments of Deva Gowda and I.K. Gujral, also cases in point, were large coalitions, as is the present BJP government, which has to carry along large number of coalition partners. Besides their ideological diversity, the coalescing parties are mostly rooted in regional demands and identities, and the criss-cross of State politics is such that parties in national coalitions often confront each other at the State level. The role of regional parties and regional leaders in the making and unmaking of national coalitions has been the most striking feature of the recent coalitions. Leaders with a regional political base and almost all committed to the politics of 'regional autonomy' in federal relations, for which many of them have been campaigning for some time, are major players in national politics. National consensus on basic issues and policies is, therefore, not easy to come by. Often even the need for such consensus

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9 Ashis Banerjee, "``Federalism and Nationalism'", in Mukherji, Nirmal, and Arora Balveer (eds.), *Federalism in India : Origins and Development*, Delhi, 1992

10 T.V. Satyamurthy, (ed.), *Region Religion, Caste, Gender and Culture in Contemporary India*, Delhi, 1995.

11 See articles in Atul Kohli, (ed.), *India's Democracy: An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations*, Princeton, 1986.

12 Paul Brass, "Pluralism, Regionalism and Decentralising Tendencies *in Contemporary Indian Politics*", in A. Jayaratnam, and Denis Dalton, (eds.), *The States of South Asia: Problems of National Integration*, Delhi, 1982.

13 Zoya Hasan, `Region and Nation in India's Politics of Transition' in Ian Copland, and John Rickard, (eds.), *Federalism: Comparative Perspectives from India and Australia*, Manohar, 1999.

14 Balveeer Arora, "Regional Aspirations and National Cohesion: Federal Coalitions in the 1998 Lok Sabha Elections", *West Bengal Political Science Review*, Vol.1, no.1-2, January-March 1998.

is not comprehended. The partners in national coalitions since 1989 have been guided by the single factor of sharing power, with little ideological commitment or coherence. As a result, the governments have not only been pulled in different directions, but have almost been made non-functional. In this game, policy making has been stalled by regional, local and even personal considerations.

Some analysts approve of the regionalisation of politics, with power shifting from the Centre to the regions, as an arrangement most suited for a diverse country like India. The 'power shift' has been perceived as a welcome change after the undue centralisation that characterised the decades of Congress rule. Still, it looks as though the power shift has left the Centre somewhat atrophied, especially with regard to the institutional base of policy making. It is noteworthy, in this context, that the 'age of coalitions' has occasioned references to the importance of 'power-sharing' and arrangements for a healthy 'federal culture'. References have been made to other countries where the stability of governments has not been affected by their coalition character,[15] and to studies showing that many coalition governments have been able to insulate their economic policies and performance from the 'politics' of coalitions.[16] These issues have been consistent themes of discussion on Indian politics in the 90s. But how do the ground realities measure up to such ideals? Indian politics was characterised by the 'one party dominance' for almost three and a half decades before moving to the coalition phase. Of the coalition governments at the State level after 1967, while those in Kerala and West Bengal can be called successful, others have not been pleasant reminders. Coalition governments, in the absence of 'coalition culture', have been indecisive and pulled and pushed in different directions. While the decade long policy of liberalisation has reached a stage of no return, from where there can be no rolling back of this package of policies, specific decisions within the package constantly face opposition from different sections of not only political groups, but more importantly, coalition partners. Thus, attempts at macro economic adjustments have repeatedly faced resistance.

## *The Electoral & Parliamentary System*

Though India has successfully held general election after general election since 1952, the process of elections has not been without serious flaws. One disturbing phenomenon has been the politics-crime nexus and the increasing number of candidates and elected representatives charged with having 'criminal backgrounds'. The Election Commission noted in 1997 that `40 MPs are involved in criminal cases pending against them; nearly 700 MLAs of the 4027 are involved in criminal cases and trials pending against them in 25 States and two Union Territories...'.[17] While there has been talk of electoral reforms from the government and other sources, there has been no concrete outcome.

15 A useful reference on this is E. Sreedharan, Coalition Politics in India: Lessons from Theory, Comparison and Recent History, CPR Monograph, 1997.

16 John Huber, "How Does Cabinet Instability Affect Political Performance?", *American Political Science Review*, Vol.92, no.3, September 1998.

17 *Times of India*, August 21, 1997.

As for parliamentary performance, analyses have indicated an incremental decline in terms of both quantity and quality.[18] A report prepared by the Lok Sabha secretariat found that a mere 22% of parliamentary time was devoted to legislation in the tenth Lok Sabha. Budget discussion took only 17.30% of time in the tenth Lok Sabha, while the corresponding figures in the seventh and eighth Lok Sabhas were around 20%. The tenth Lok Sabha lost about a tenth of its life due to interruptions and adjournments, often accompanied by disorderly scenes.[19]

With its weak institutions devoid of a sense of accountability, the political system has lost its credibility and is unable to provide effective administration. People have felt helpless in the light of ineffective and unaccountable governmental institutions. A `Crisis of Governability' seems to have gripped the Indian political system.

The strengthening of the institutions local self-government especially after 1992, is aimed at introducing some amount of transparency in public life, but the control over the local administrative structure is yet to be transferred to the local bodies.

# The Judiciary

The Judiciary, another pillar of country's governance, is important both for rule of law and the requirement of a federal system. In the first decades of Independence, the judiciary was often in conflict with the legislature, but that was a part of the legitimate realm of Judicial Review. Since the 1980s, however, judicial actions have been increasingly in the realm of the Executive, even in its detailed administrative functioning.[20] Such interventions are often occasioned by public interest litigations, whose numbers have increased over the years. There are also occasions when the Executive is reminded of the lapses in the performance of its legitimate functions. Judicial reprimands of the Executive have taken several forms, often to the latter's embarrassment.

Judicial institutions have been comparatively insulated from changes in politics and society and have experienced lower degree of erosion of l credibility. This is more true of higher levels of the Judicial hierarchy, e.g. the Supreme Court and the High Courts, than of the Judiciary at the lower levels. In a general atmosphere of institutional vacuum, the Judiciary has often been viewed as a mechanism of correcting the political and administrative malaise. It is often with a great deal of hope that individuals and social institutions have approached the Judiciary with their problems. Political institutions, as well as political functionaries, also have carried some issues to the Judiciary, when they either found that there were no easy solutions, or simply to escape certain political traps. The Judiciary itself has been conscious of the institutional vacuum and has initiated action *suo moto*.

18 A. Surya Prakash, *What Ails Indian Parliament? An Exhaustive Diagnosis*, New Delhi, Indus, 1995.

19 *Times of India*, 3 December, 1996.

20 For a detailed analysis, See Upendra Baxi, `Judicial Activism, Legal Education and Research in Globalising India - I, II, III,' Annual Capital Foundation Lecture, *Mainstream*, February 24, March 2 and 9, 1996.

With the Judiciary in an `activist' mode, questions have raised about its role in the Indian political system. The three branches of government, the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary are constituted differently and have assigned functions. The taking over of the function of one by another is not a solution. Such a situation creates tensions in the working of institutions and their mutual relationship. Also, while getting involved with issues that have to be handled by the Executive, the Judiciary may find itself in a position of helplessness in getting its decisions implemented. The Judiciary ultimately has to rely on the governmental machinery to give its decisions a concrete administrative shape, and a situation where the Judiciary gives a direction (through its decisions) and then discovers that the Executive either does not, or can not, implement it, will contribute to the erosion of the authority of the Judiciary.

An important question that has to be raised, even if not fully answered, is to what extent the objectives of democracy will be served by judicial activism. Should the courts be called upon to adjudicate on questions of political wisdom or public policy? The last two decades of the working of the Indian higher judiciary raises new questions about its relationship with the Executive, its own institutional health in the context of its evolving relationship with the Executive, and ultimately its role in the better functioning of Indian democratic political system.

The problems faced by the Judiciary and the legal system are enormous. Many laws the Judiciary is expected to enforce are outdated and efforts at rationalising them, especially the Criminal and Civil Procedure Codes and the Evidence Laws have proved difficult. There are laws that are as old as 1857 and just not relevant. The Law Commission has identified as many as 400 obsolete Acts.[21] Then there has been an `inflationary growth' in legislation that has provided more occasions for litigation. Shortage in the number of judicial officers, the sheer number cases that the judiciary has to tackle, the legal proceedings, all have contribute to a backlog of pending cases that would take decades to clear up. In the Delhi High Court alone, there were 1,46,613 pending cases in 1995, out of which 42144 were pending for more than five years and 425 for more than ten years.[22] Speedy and inexpensive justice to the people remains an unattained ideal. Besides, the costs of litigation keep many genuinely aggrieved persons away from the law courts.

A significant step in the direction to taking "justice to the doorstep of the people" is the system of *Lok Adalats*, introduced first by the Gujarat State Legal Aid Board in 1985. Many States, with the support of the Judiciary, have enacted laws for the setting up of *Lok Adalats*. Under this dispensation, disputes that can be settled by mutual agreements are resolved on the basis of facts and documents, out of court, with the help of arbitrators. Cases settled in this manners include minor

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21 *The Times of India*, 31 October 2000.

22 *The Times of India*, 12 December 1995.

property disputes, insurance and motor vehicles claims, and so on. As an alternative to the courts, *Lok Adalats* are a good supplement to the judicial system.

# The Civil Service

The Bureaucracy has repeatedly been referred to as a stabilising factor. The elite structure of well-trained civil servants provided a healthy continuity that was an asset in the wake of enormous administrative problems immediately after Independence. That structure has been retained almost unaltered, even though, along with the change in the objectives to encompass development-related concerns and the expansion in development activities, many structural changes have also came about. The first major exercise for administrative reforms was undertaken in 1969 by the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC), whose Chairman, Morarji Desai was an experienced administrator and also an important political leader. It is also fair to keep in mind the `good intentions' of other leaders to bring about administrative reforms. But the agenda of administrative reforms (like many other structural reforms) remained largely unattended.

The decay of institutions, especially since the 70s, did not leave the bureaucracy untouched. Today, the politicisation of the civil services is rampant. Civil servants in many States are divided along caste lines. One comes across reports of the civil servant-politician-criminal nexus. Corruption is mentioned almost as a routine characteristic of the bureaucracy. These factors have affected the 'control structure' of the bureaucracy and its effectiveness and legitimacy. The bureaucracy has become synonymous with 'rent seeking'. The 'steel frame' lies severely rusted. A serving civil servant remarks: `In almost all States, people perceive bureaucracy as wooden, disinterested in public welfare, and corrupt."[23]

The police has perhaps been worst affected by the process of decay. It has become largely ineffective, as is evidenced by the creation of a large number of para-military forces and the increasing frequency with which regular military deployment is done for civil administration. Sadly, the elaborate recommendations of the Police Commission remain unattended. There has also been some neglect on the part of the government in keeping the police adequately equipped. The most essential regulatory branch of government is the best example of atrophy.

As we go from the State level to the level of the district and further down the administrative system,[24] the erosion of the structure is more severe and apparent. The lower levels of the executive agency, especially the field bureaucracy, are crucial for governance and, in particular, the implementation of development programmes. Being closer to the society and social realities, these levels have to consciously insulate themselves to work effectively. However, consideration of caste, class, family, money power and other aspects of social inequality have penetrated the administrative structure. The structures of social inequality are reflected in the working of bureaucracy, which manifests all its distortions, so that

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23 N.C. Saxena, "How Have the Poor done? Mid-term Review of Ninth Plan", Economic *and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXV, No. 41, October 7-13, 2000)

24 Sunday, 30 November - 6 November 1997 - quotes examples from Bihar

caste affiliations are able to interfere with police activities and the implementation of development programs. Corruption is rampant and no one even tries to provide any camouflage to such practices. Even more disturbing, instances of liaison between the field administration and terror-based groups have come to light. The three main structures at the local levels - the police, the revenue and the development functionaries - remain completely 'penetrated' and ineffective.

The political executives, especially the Prime Ministers since Nehru, have had their own misgivings about the bureaucracy for different reasons.[25] With the advent of coalition governments at the Centre and Prime Ministers who head unwieldy and precarious coalitions, the rusted bureaucracy has filled in the institutional vacuum, but the line of accountability and control between the political executive and the civil service has fallen into disuse and misuse. It seems that it is at those moments and on those issues on which the political executive cannot, or is not willing to act, that the bureaucracy makes itself felt, not always with healthy consequences. Prime Minister Deva Gowda admitted in the Rajya Sabha that the bureaucracy sometimes reverses cabinet decisions. He said, `I feel disgusted'. He went on to add that ministers are `damned scared' to give specific directions or overrule the objections raised by the Secretaries.[26] It is bad enough to have a bureaucracy that indulges in an act that is not in keeping with the Constitution and democratic propriety, but it is worse to have a political executive that expresses its helplessness when faced with such situations! Their expression of helplessness is partly an attempt by the political executive to shift the responsibility of their own mismanagement of governance to the bureaucracy. There is now the widespread practice of the political executive using its power to serve personal and party interests and making the bureaucracy an ally in this.

It has been suggested that the administrative structure be made open to experts and others who are knowledgeable in specialised fields. This has not happened in any systematic manner. The earlier system of the creation of financial and economic service posts consisting of officers wanting to specialise had resulted in the development of high level expertise among a select pool of officers. The pressure of vested interests however led to the abandonment of this scheme. After that, expertise has been inducted on a highly selective and *ad hoc* basis, leaving the administrative structure as a whole in charge of the generalists.

In those ministries where the bureaucracy is face to face with other structures, the relation between the two is a major area of tension. Thus, a major restructuring in the Ministry of Defence became necessary to make the relationship between the Ministry officials and the defence personnel follow a clearly defined demarcation.

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25 For this analysis and some interesting remarks by some Prime Ministers about bureaucracy, see Potter, David, "The Prime Minister and the Bureaucracy", in James Manor, (ed.), *Nehru to the Nineties: The Changing Office of Prime Minister in India*, London, Hurst and Co., 1994.

26 *The Hindustan Times*, March 21, 1997.

Another problem is that many of the proposals for private investment have fallen through or have been withdrawn because of bureaucratic delays. The most respected business house of Tatas went public complaining harassment when they withdrew their aviation project. Many foreign investors and bodies like FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM have complained of administrative hurdles. Political uncertainty is always in the air when almost everyday one partner of the coalition or the other issues threats to withdraw support to the government, with the result that even committed investment is not forthcoming. According to the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy ` ... projects entailing an investment of Rs. 4382 crore were abandoned in 96-97. Next year investors dumped projects worth Rs. 7474 crore. And in the first six months of 98-99 projects worth Rs. 9994 crore have been shelved."[27]

Besides the structural problems of bureaucracy, there are major attitudinal hurdles as well. Most of the civil servants at higher levels spent a major part of their official life in the 'interventionist phase' of the Indian State. It is not easy for them to comprehend the expected change in their approach and behaviour in accordance with the changed model. As such, the bureaucracy is too well known as a structure that does not change very easily! The bureaucrats' approach to many new proposals in the new institutional context is from the angle of 'the boss'. Sometimes proposals for liberalisation seem to affect their power, privileges and patronage. Many of the proposals of privatisation and dis-investment get stalled and delayed because of lack of flexibility and understanding on the part of the bureaucrats, who are the main negotiators and actors. Bureaucracy is not best suited for the `relation based government style', as is illustrated in several sectors of the liberalisation policy where `policies are made through negotiations between policy-makers and economic actors'.[28]

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27 "Going Flat on Funds", *India Today*, February 22, 1999.

28 Sen, Chirnajib, "The Budget, Government Style and Sustainability of Economic Reform in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 45, November 7-13, 1999, P. 2845